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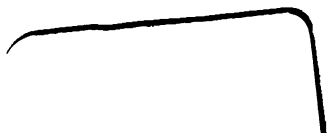
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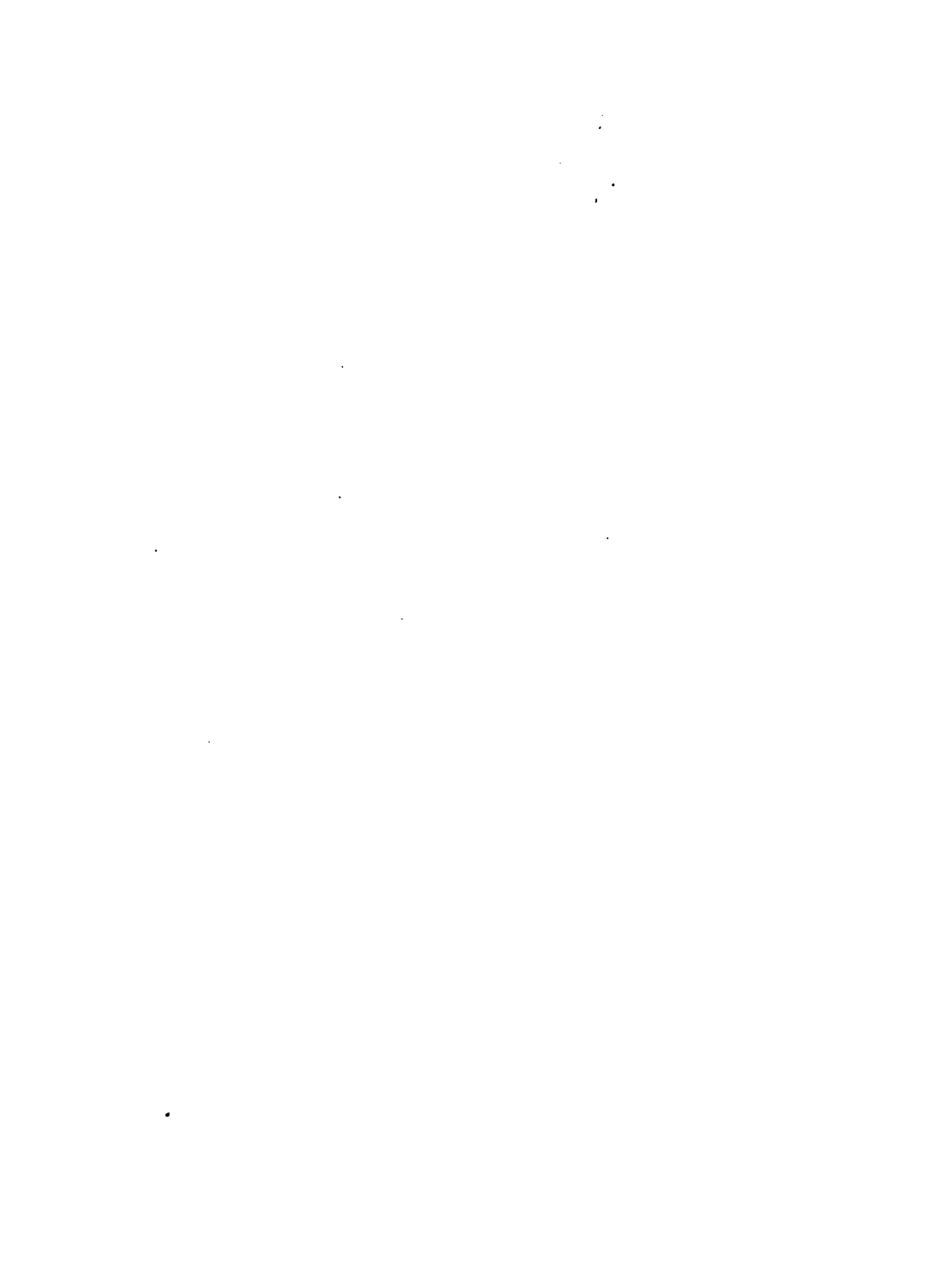




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# BENEATH THE WAVE.





# BENEATH THE WAVE

J. Nobel

BY

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"THE VICAR'S GOVERNESS," "THE MINER'S OATH,"  
ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I



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TO  
W. F. TILLOTSON, ESQ.,  
OF BOLTON,  
THIS BOOK IS  
**Dedicated,**  
AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF ESTEEM  
FOR HIS ENERGY, KINDNESS, AND ABILITY,  
BY  
THE AUTHOR.



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# BENEATH THE WAVE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### SANDA-BY-THE-SEA.

ON a wild headland of our north-eastern coast stands the village of Sanda-by-the-Sea. The village itself is rather picturesque looking, for mingled among the humble cottages of the fishermen, of which it principally consists, are some old and curiously built houses of a better class. In one of these at the time of which I am writing lived the incumbent of Sanda—the incumbent who, on the Sunday morning in October when this story begins, was about twelve o'clock preaching his sermon in his grey and venerable church. There he stood in the



ancient wooden pulpit, where had stood many incumbents before him, telling his scanty congregation, with a certain amount of fluency and ease, about the old story of which we never tire. A pleasant, rather comical face, had the Rev. Matthew Irvine—the Rev. Matt, as he was very commonly called, when he was not present, by his not over respectful parishioners. But he had a pleasant face, sweet, thoughtful, and humorous, and with a sort of pathetic comicality in its expression which surely never belonged to an Englishman. He was, in fact, Irish, but had lived so long in England that most of his original nationalities had passed away. But the sweet, comical smile lingered about his face still, and he had a sort of lightheartedness also which is not very usual among our grave and somewhat solemn countrymen.

Yet he had had many trials, and life for him had lain along no smooth or pleasant roadway. To begin with, he was poor; to go on with, he had a sickly wife; and to end with, he

was a schoolmaster as well as a clergyman, and driving Latin and Greek into the brains of stupid or idle boys is by no means conducive to enlivening existence.

“But we must take things as they come,” he used to say ; and so he went on, bearing his burdens along with him, and stopping often on his way to help a fellow-traveller who was perhaps more heavily laden than he was. His heaviest burden most men would have thought was his wife. She was not a lady ; she was very sickly ; and he had never been in love with her. His marriage came about in this fashion. His first curacy was in a remote part of the country, and when he was appointed, there was not a lodging to be procured in the neighbourhood. His vicar was in despair ; but at last a grazier in the village, a well-to-do and jolly man, offered the young curate (as an accommodation to his friend the vicar) a temporary home in his house.

The grazier was a widower with one daughter ; and though this young woman was

by no means handsome, she had many suitors, for the grazier was supposed to be, and at that time actually was, very rich. But after the arrival of the Rev. Matthew (then a handsome young man of twenty-four), Miss Shadwell (the grazier's name was Shadwell) would never look again either at farmer, grazier, or butcher, or indeed at any of the young men of her own class of life, who had come courting her before. She fell, in fact, in love with the dark, soft-eyed young Irishman; and what chance had the poor fellow, with his generous nature and sweet disposition, to escape? She would marry him, and she did marry him; for the Rev. Matthew felt that he could not break the poor girl's heart. She was really deeply in love with him, and when he saw that it was to be he tried his best to return her affection.

Well, they married, and by and bye, as years rolled on, when perhaps the curate was naturally expecting from his supposed wealthy father-in-law some little help more than the small yearly allowance he had agreed at the

time of the marriage to give them, the grazier himself fell into difficulties. This was a great blow. Mrs. Matthew was frightfully delicate. Indeed, as she herself expressed it in her somewhat peculiar phraseology, she "was only held together by a pin." The necessary pin had, however, apparently been left out in the composition of the various little babes that she had presented to the unhappy curate, for one after another they had all died. Of the ten children that were born to him, only one survived ; but the advent and departure of the little ones all cost money, and so the Rev. Matthew had got poorer year by year.

At last he was appointed by an amiable bishop to the incumbency of Sanda, which was then worth about two hundred and fifty pounds a year. There was a large house also attached, and the good bishop suggested that as Sanda was considered healthy, a school would be likely to succeed there. Upon this hint the Rev. Matthew acted, and he had been tolerably successful in his undertaking.

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He had indeed a fairly good school—some twenty boarders perhaps—and some day scholars. He was thus in easier circumstances, and the sweet temper that had carried him through all his troubles was his still.

Such was the Rev. Matthew Irvine, incumbent of Sanda, who, now some nine years ago, was on a certain Sunday morning in October preaching to his congregation.

The congregation is easily described. In a square pew near the pulpit sat a pale, gaunt woman, who was the parson's wife. In the two next pews were the schoolboys—pale boys, rosy boys, fat boys, and thin boys, but the fat ones and the rosy ones were in the majority.

Among the boys sat Philip Hayward, the tutor. He was a broad-browed young man, with a straight nose, but not handsome. He was clever. You saw that when you met the grey, thoughtful, inquiring, dissatisfied eyes. He was also unhappy, and was at that age when such men as he look for perfection that

they cannot find, and then see more imperfections than really exist around them.

He was looking now steadily with his grey eyes fixed on the red curtains and brass rod round Mr. Trevor's pew. Mr. Trevor was the squire of Sanda; the largest landowner, nay, the only landowner, for miles and miles around. He was a wealthy man also, having married for money; and in his own estimation, and in the estimation of the little world around him, he was a very great man indeed.

So Philip Hayward sat with his eyes fixed on the red curtains of the squire's pew, but though he could not see through it, we are privileged to do so, and I can promise you that the occupants of this pew were well worth looking at.

First there was Mr. Trevor—Reginald Trevor, Esq., J.P.—a tall, thin, grey-haired gentlemanly-looking man, with a narrow forehead and thin lips, and a brain of no great capacity, filled with narrow ideas and prejudice to the very brim. Then there was

---

Miss Trevor—Isabel Trevor. What was it that made you think, when you looked at her face, of all the fair and frail ones, famous in history and song, who have tempted men to destruction and shame? Yet it was a beautiful face—almost too beautiful, with the rippling golden hair swept from the white brow, and the rarely regular features, and full ripe lips. Yes, she was a beauty, and she knew it, and prized it above all her other possessions. She was Mr. Trevor's only daughter, and would be very rich, but she cared or thought very little about her wealth. She thought a great deal more about the straight, regular features, and the large, restless eyes whose power she knew. She was then about twenty-two, and had had many lovers; though prudent men were afraid somehow of this imperial beauty, and contented themselves with humbler women, who gave them more for their love than Isabel Trevor ever would have done. It was said of her sometimes that she had no heart; but we shall know her better by and bye, and be able to judge whether the

soul within suited the splendid garb in which it was clothed.

Seated near her, but still at some little distance, was her second, or rather third cousin, and companion, Hilda Marston. Here was a very different face—a sweet sensible, clever face, scarcely pretty and yet attractive, and with something in it that told you that the girl had thought of many things beyond the narrow circle in which she lived. She was a distant cousin of the Trevors; but this relationship was never mentioned in the household, it was understood there that it was not to be mentioned; and Miss Marston understood that she ought to consider herself a very fortunate young woman to be allowed to be one of the inhabitants of Sanda Hall. This is easily accounted for. She was the orphan and penniless daughter of a clergyman, and the Trevors naturally considered that they had done a very exemplary action in taking their poor relation to live with them. She was about the same age as Isabel Trevor, and very useful to her. She was indeed a clever



girl, and tried to do her duty fairly enough, but sometimes, no doubt, she found it a little irksome.

These, then, were the three occupants of the squire's pew—Mr. Trevor, Miss Trevor, and Miss Marston—and by-and-bye, after the Rev. Matthew had pronounced the benediction over his scanty flock in that strangely half-pathetic, half comic voice of his, and after the commoner portion of that flock had disappeared through the humble doorway of the church, the squire opened his pew door and walked majestically down the narrow aisle, with his head thrown high in the air. Then followed Miss Trevor, with her head thrown back proudly also, and then Miss Marston, who carried herself with a meeker carriage, remembering, perhaps, that this was the house of God.

They passed into the churchyard beyond—the seaside churchyard. Let us pause a moment here and look at the fishermen's gravestones. Here is one—Joshua Davidson, aged forty-two, drowned on such a date ; also

his son, Joshua, drowned the same date, aged eighteen. Turn to another, James Johnston, whose fishing boat capsized on such a night, drowned with three mates, whose bodies were never recovered, and so on. All around are the records of the cruel sea. Boys, middle-aged men, and old men—all have gone down. Some, you will see, have been drowned far from home, when some big ship disappeared with all her crew, but mostly the inhabitants of this place have perished almost within sight of it. Through these monuments by the shore, the squire passed down, with his head still thrown high in the air. It was its natural position, he thought, and he held it high to show how superior his head was to all the heads of his fellow-creatures around him.

One of the schoolboys (a curly-haired, rosy-cheeked urchin) was lingering behind the rest in the churchyard to speak to the squire's family. Mr. Trevor looked at him, did not smile, but with one of his thin, well-gloved hands, gave a little pat on the boy's shoulders.

"Well, Edward?" he said, and that was all.

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The boy upon this grinned, touched his hat, and then ran up to Miss Marston.

"How are you, Hil?" he said, and Miss Marston stooped down and kissed his rosy cheek.

He was her brother, a dependant also on Mr. Trevor's bounty, and he was one of the Rev. Matthew Irvine's scholars.

"Well, my dear," said Miss Hilda, "and have you been a good boy in church?"

"Of course," replied Ned Marston, as his sister playfully and unbelievably shook her head.

By this time the party had reached the end of the narrow pathway among the graves, and had come to the gate of the churchyard. As they passed through this they overtook the grave-faced tutor, Philip Hayward, who was lingering there under the pretext of waiting for his pupil, Ned Marston. He touched his hat to the squire as he passed him, and the squire touched his hat in return. Mr. Trevor paid the tutor this compliment because he was a B.A. and a gentleman, and

because he had never seen anything in his conduct that he disapproved of. Miss Trevor, too, looked one moment at Mr. Hayward as she went by, and a faint smile—scarcely a smile—stole over her lovely lips in token of recognition. She had hardly ever exchanged a word with him, but she had been with Miss Marston when Miss Marston had talked to the tutor about her little brother, and so she did not utterly ignore his presence. A sudden flush rose to Hayward's face as Miss Trevor thus acknowledged him, and as he took off his hat and stood bare-headed before her, his eyes were fixed upon her face with a look of almost passionate admiration. Then, as she passed on, he gave a restless sigh and turned away—turned to face Miss Hilda Marston, who held out her hand to the tutor with a smile.

“What a bright fine day it is, Mr. Hayward!” said Miss Marston courteously.

“Yes,” answered the tutor, but he said even that brief monosyllable absently. He was not thinking of the pleasant face before

him, but of the beautiful one that had passed by. Not of Hilda Marston, who was willing and anxious to be his friend ; but of a woman to whom he was nothing, nothing, at least, but one of the many men who greatly admired her, and as such, perhaps, he was not quite indifferent to Miss Isabel Trevor.

The tutor did not offer to accompany Miss Marston and her brother to the squire's carriage, which was waiting a few yards off the churchyard gate on the roadway. He knew that to have done so would have been to have forgotten his proper station in the squire's eyes ; but he stood still and watched the ladies enter the carriage, and saw the disappointed look of the boy, Ned Marston, when he drove away. Sometimes (not every Sunday, though) Mr. Trevor would ask Ned to lunch with them at the Hall. He did not do so this Sunday, however, and Ned came back to his master with a disappointed look ; for besides the lunch the squire always gave him half a crown when he went away.

Thus, the half-crown and the lunch and

not seeing more of his sister combined, naturally created great disappointment in Ned's youthful heart. Could we have seen straight therein, we should have seen that though the lunch was nice, and seeing his sister was nice, that the half crown was the nicest of all to Ned's imagination. Pray, do not despise Ned. He was merely an ordinary schoolboy, and had private necessities of his own for that half-crown, in the liquidation of debts which he had incurred in the vain expectation of receiving it.

He came back with rather a rueful countenance then to his tutor, and Hayward smiled grimly at the boy as he did so.

"So they haven't asked you?" he said.

"No, it's a shame, isn't it?" answered Ned.

"And I hadn't time to say a word to Hil."

Oh, Ned, Ned, have you begun so soon? Here was a boy scarcely eleven years of age, putting his best foot forward already. "Not time to say a word to Hil," indeed! While all the time he was thinking of that lost half-crown.

The tutor, who did not know of the half-crown inducement to visit the Hall, now smiled more kindly on the boy.

"Well, they'll ask you another time," he said, "and then you'll see more of your sister." And he drew the lad's arm through his as he spoke.

He, too, did this for a motive ; a motive, however, unconscious to himself. This boy was the link—the one link—between him and Isabel Trevor. For this reason the tutor clung to this boy, and gave him little boats and bats, and talked to him as he talked to no other boy in the school. Thus, Hilda Marston was grateful to the tutor for his kindness to her little brother, and anxious to be his friend. But such a friendship would never have been allowed, they both knew, by the squire, and therefore their acquaintance continued to be of a very distant description.

The two—the tutor and Ned Marston—then followed the rest of the school boys to the incumbent's house. This stood in the village, nearly surrounded by the broken-down, quaint,

and in many instances, squalid cottages of the fishermen. You entered it by rather an imposing iron gateway, and in the front of the house was a large grass plot, with a sun dial in the midst. Then you came to the house. Grey and green with damp and mists were its walls, and blown and torn even in October were the creepers that the Rev. Matthew endeavoured most assiduously to train against them. It was a large, roomy, and commodious house, and built back; the back windows looking out on the sea, and the front ones on the village. Scarcely a healthy place for boys, you would say; and yet it was so, for if in the front sometimes came the smell of stale fish and other impurities, at the back did not the glorious sea breezes, fresh and health giving, blow with uninterrupted vigour?

Presently the effect of these breezes was shown at the dinner table. Round the Rev. Matthew's substantial board gathered the fat boys and the thin boys, the pale boys and the rosy boys. Oh! how they ate! But not until the Rev. Matthew had blessed the meal. In



his quaint and pleasant way he stood up and said a simple grace, and after this, with right good will, they all began. The Rev. Matthew also played a fair knife and fork, and ate his dinner with a grateful and contented mind. There was real piety indeed in the heart of this humble parson. He believed. He saw beyond the trials and discomforts of his earthly home. He saw a kingdom which would never end, and joys and glories to which he was the heir. Oh! scorn him not, you higher clergy, who dwell in the pleasant places of the Church and sit beneath the shadows of the grey cathedral towers. He is not one of you now, but his promised reward is the same, and if you have ten talents laid out in well-doing, he has his five also employed in his Master's service.

So the Rev. Matthew enjoyed his dinner with a grateful heart, and the boys enjoyed theirs too, with no especial feeling about the matter except that roast beef and plum pudding are good and pleasant to the taste. Then, when the meal was over, they went bounding

out of doors—bounding, running, racing, leaping along the big brown rugged cliffs on which Sanda stands, and down the rude roadway which leads to the long yellow sands beyond.

On these sands, this October afternoon, the sea was breaking in deep, white-crested waves—waves which came rolling slowly and majestically on the shore. It was not a storm; not one of those days when the voices of the deep bring terror to the dwellers on the land. But it was a heavy sea, and as the boys ran on in their play the tutor walked apart, moody and restless, as the great mass of waters spread out before him.

Suddenly he was startled by a cry—a cry from the boys. Ned Marston ran up to him, gesticulating and pointing to the sea. Then some of the others followed.

“Look, Mr. Hayward, look there, Sir,” cried Ned.

“It’s a corpse!” said another.

“It’s a whale!” said a third.

Upon this the tutor looked at the dark

object in the sea which had attracted the attention of the schoolboys. This object came forward and went backward with the waves. It was receding when the tutor first saw it, and behind it and around it floated something long and dark. Hayward was keen-eyed, and he was also brave.

"It's a body," he said briefly, and as he spoke he began to prepare himself to plunge into the sea.

There was no great danger, though the surf was heavy and rolling, for the tutor was a practised swimmer, and in almost as short a time as it takes to tell it, Hayward had swam out into the sea, had reached the dark object floating there, had twined some of the long hair which floated round it over his strong arm, and so swam backwards to the shore, bringing the body with him.

The boys ran forward to assist him to land it, to assist him in laying it straight and decently on the sand, and then clustered eagerly round. It was a woman's body—a woman past her first youth, and dark and

foreign looking. Many days apparently had this poor corpse tossed in the restless sea. It was bruised, and the rich clothing in which it had been attired was rent and torn. But on the hands glittered and sparkled, as the water fell away from them, some valuable rings. The tutor lifted the left hand and looked at the third finger. The symbol of marriage was there. It was a wife, perhaps a mother, then, that the sea had given up from its wild keeping.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE STORM.

THERE was great excitement in Sanda during the afternoon after this incident. Dead bodies were not very unusual visitors to this shore, but these were mostly of rough seamen, or of hardy fishermen, whose little cots stood on the great brown cliffs above. But this woman's body was another thing. The squire himself came down on the sands and condescended to examine the cold damp hands, where glittered and shone four costly rings beside the wedding one. The gems in these rings he pronounced to be of great value, and three of them to be of foreign workmanship. One, however, was apparently an English ring—a great, heavy, diamond hoop.

"It looks like a family ring," said the squire.

"Ah, poor soul, it won't matter to her now, whether it's a family ring or otherwise," said the Rev. Matthew, who also had come down upon the shore.

"It may to her surviving relations, though, Mr. Irvine," said the squire, throwing his head high in the air.

"I was thinking of the poor creature herself," answered the gentle parson, "and how now she will be far above such gauds as these." And he reverently lifted one of the cold, damp, decorated hands in his as he spoke.

"It is our duty," said the squire, pompously, "to endeavour to discover who is now the legal owner of these rings."

"To be sure," said the parson, "and in the meantime won't ye take charge of them yerself, Mr. Trevor? Ye see," he added, with his comical smile, "ye're the only one of us about here rich enough to trust with them."

"I trust that this is not so," answered Mr. Trevor, yet more pompously. "But if you

think it is my duty," he added, "to take charge of these jewels as the lord of the manor, I will not shirk that duty."

"I thought ye wouldn't, squire," said the parson (for you see he was Irish, and loved to say pleasant things); and the squire bowed gravely in acknowledgment of the compliment.

So the squire became custodian of the dead woman's rings, and by his direction the corpse was carried up the rough road from the sands to the cliffs, on which Sanda stands. The next day the inquest on the body was held, but nothing further was elicited on that occasion. The tutor, Philip Hayward, gave evidence, and the schoolboys. The coroner, in summing up, said something complimentary to Mr. Hayward for the courage he had displayed in swimming out to recover the body.

"There was no danger," interrupted the tutor, gravely.

Still the coroner considered that courage had been displayed; and after the inquest was over, Mr. Trevor said pretty much the same thing.

He went, indeed, up to the tutor as he was leaving the room, where the inquiry had been held, and slightly touched his arm.

"Mr. Hayward," he said, as the tutor turned sharply round, "I also wish to say a few words to you about your conduct yesterday."

The tutor was now facing the squire, and measuring him mentally, as such men as Hayward unconsciously measure their fellow-men.

"I do not suppose," continued the squire, "that as you justly stated, there was much danger to life or limb in recovering the unfortunate woman's body that we have just viewed. But I consider there was moral courage, and promptness of action; and such qualities deserve praise. I, therefore, who am ever ready to give praise where it is deserved, wish now to express to you my sense of appreciation of your conduct, and I assure you I do so with much pleasure."

All the time that this long speech was going on, the tutor was looking at the squire. The tutor, with his pale earnest face and



thoughtful eyes, was looking at the narrow-minded being that social position had made his superior.

"I deserve no praise," he answered, quietly, after the squire had finished his speech.

"I have pleasure in thinking that you do," said Mr. Trevor, with a bow. "I also appreciate another good quality that you appear to possess, which is modesty—a quality peculiarly fitted to a young man who has his way to make in life—and if I can be of any future service to you, I assure you, young Sir, that I will gladly exert my influence in your behalf."

"You are very good, Sir," replied Hayward, and the squire then bowed again, and having bowed also to the Coroner, majestically left the room.

Isabel Trevor had heard with almost contemptuous indifference of the body that had been washed ashore.

"It is probably some foreign sea captain's wife," she said.

"Poor, poor woman!" said Hilda Marston with a sigh.

The two ladies were sitting in the drawing-room of Sanda Hall when this conversation took place. Sanda Hall was then, and is now, a grey and ancient house, the stone of which is green, mildewed and worn; that of the pillars of the gateway being absolutely hollowed out with the action of the sea air. It is built in two wings, with a broad front, and is in the centre of extensive grounds. The wood around it is, however, a failure; stunted and dwarfed are the trees by the piercing winds and uncongenial climate of the North-Eastern coast. Everything that wealth could do there was done to make it look cheerful, yet Sanda Hall was, and is, a cheerless-looking dwelling. In the drawing-room, at the time of which I am writing, Isabel Trevor's luxurious tastes were plainly visible. Everything here was rich and brilliant-hued, and well suited the tall, golden-haired, beautiful woman, who had adorned it to her taste.

She was standing in one of the deep windows,

tormenting a grey and rose-coloured parrot with a gold pen, when she made the remark about the poor woman's body recovered from the sea being a foreign sea captain's wife, and she had scarcely noticed Miss Marston's reply, so occupied was she with her present amusement. She was still thus employed (the parrot bristling her feathers and screeching her disapproval) when Mr. Trevor entered the room, and approaching his daughter, said :

"I have just returned from the inquest, Isabel, held on that unfortunate woman. See, these are the rings I told you of."

Isabel turned sharply round at these words, and flung down her pen on a table near, and stretched out her hands for the rings.

"Why, papa," she said, after examining them for a minute, "these are splendid rings ! I do not think," she went on, "that these could have belonged to a common sea captain's wife."

"No, impossible," said Mr. Trevor. "Look at the diamond hoop, Isabel. Are they not splendid stones ?"

"Splendid!" echoed Isabel, almost covetously. "I have none such, papa."

"Well, my dear, if we could only discover their rightful possessor, we might buy them, perhaps," said Mr. Trevor.

"And there was no clue discovered to-day, then?" asked Isabel. "No one identified the body?"

"There were no witnesses but young Hayward, Mr. Irvine's tutor, and some of the schoolboys," answered Mr. Trevor. "But I proposed after the inquiry was over that advertisements should be inserted in the *Times*, and some of the local papers; and what else can be done?"

"What else, seemingly?" said Isabel. "But, papa," she added, after thinking a minute, "if these rings never find a proper owner, won't they become legally yours as lord of the manor?"

"I should not care to broach that claim, Isabel," answered the squire, who was not so fond of rings as his daughter.

"Well, at all events," said Isabel (who was

a woman who took sudden fancies), "I think I shall wear this one for the present." And she kept turning the heavy diamond hoop, as she spoke, slowly round one of her delicate fingers. Suddenly she drew it off and examined the inside rim attentively. "Look here," she cried, "look, papa; look, Miss Marston—here's a discovery! What do you think is engraved here? See, quite distinctly. '*To my Beloved.*' It's a romance, I declare, a complete romance!"

The squire and Miss Marston examined the diamond hoop in turns. The inscription in the inner rim was quite plain—" *To my Beloved.*"

It seemed sad to Miss Marston, who laid down the ring gravely and with a sigh.

"Poor woman!" she said, "then her death has left someone's life desolate!"

"Someone will console himself," replied Miss Trevor, carelessly; and she again lifted the diamond ring and this time placed it on one of her fingers.

"I shall wear Mr. Someone's ring until he

comes for it," she said. And she held out her slender hand to admire it.

"I would be afraid," said Miss Marston, almost with a shudder, looking at the ring on Isabel's white finger.

"Would you?" answered Isabel Trevor, with a little laugh. She was thinking, "Poor thing, she hasn't a chance of wearing it," but she did not say this.

Thus Isabel Trevor took possession of the diamond hoop and continued occasionally to wear it. She did this from a mere whim. But she took whims—fancied one thing particularly one week and entirely forgot it the next. At the present moment her whim was the dead woman's diamond ring.

The dead woman herself was buried a few days after this, for obvious reasons. She was buried in the churchyard of Sanda-by-the-Sea, and the Rev. Matthew Irvine read the service over her body.

She had only two mourners who followed her to the grave, and one of these was the tutor, Philip Hayward; the other his friend

among the schoolboys, Ned Marston. Miss Marston was pleased when she heard that her young brother had gone, and she told him so.

"Old Hayward wanted me to go," truthfully affirmed Master Ned, "but it was rather a sell."

So the poor bruised body lay still beneath the earth at last, after its long wanderings apparently amid the restless waves. On the following Sunday Miss Marston went up and looked at the newly-made grave; but Miss Trevor, though she still wore the dead woman's ring, did not approach it. This was not from any feeling on the subject. The freshly cut turf, lying over the poor tenant beneath, awoke no emotions in Miss Trevor's heart; but she simply left the churchyard quickly, because it was beginning to rain, and because the weather was threatening to be yet more wet and stormy.

This was not only a threat. The wind veered round to the south-east during the afternoon, and by midnight a perfect gale

was blowing on the coast. Long before the night set in, the fishermen had lit the beacon on the cliff, and had drawn their boats high upon the shore, and had gathered in their gear, and had placed everything, as far as they could, in safety from the expected storm. And the storm came. Such a storm as had not raged on the coast for thirty years. Isabel Trevor heard it and trembled lying in her down bed beneath the substantial roof of Sanda Hall. The squire heard it and felt uncomfortable; and Hilda Marston heard it and turned on her pillow to pray.

"God help the poor sailors!" she said, "God help all those at sea!"

Other prayers, too, were offered in the village of Sanda that night for the poor seamen out in this awful gale. The Rev. Matthew got up and knelt reverently down.

"Lord, be with Thy poor creatures exposed to this dreadful blast," he said. "God be merciful to us sinners, this night and for evermore."

Under his roof, too, the tutor rose rest-  
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lessly, and looked out on the blackened sky. He, too, was thinking of the men at sea—thinking vaguely and passionately of the great unsolved problems which lie between this life and the life which is to come. He had none of the Rev. Matthew's simple faith; he had only a great heart "crying for the light." To him had not come "the peace of believing"; and yet he knew, he felt, that his soul would not die here, nor perish when the time came that his earthly form should be consigned to the dust.

He stood and looked at the blackened sky and heard the raging of the waters below. He knew that, unheard and unseen, strong men would at that moment be in their death agony. Where would these poor souls go, he thought, after their brief struggle for life was over? He did not pray for them. He stood there gloomy and irresolute, wondering if anything could be done—if his weak arm could save one victim from the cruel sea? When the morning broke, the sky was one dull, uniform, leaden grey. The wind

was blowing a hurricane, and the rain fell in great splashing, blinding drops, and the banks and cliffs were white—white with the wild sea foam that blew inland every moment in huge flakes on the flying scud.

Below, near the steep cliffs on which Sanda stands, wrecked on one of the great shelving rocks that jut out into the sea, a ship was lying with her keel uppermost. She was a foreign brig, and broke up before the day was over, and her crushed and rotten timbers were all that came on shore to tell the tale of her last struggles during that wild night.

The storm continued the whole day, and about three o'clock even increased in intensity. By this time nearly all the inhabitants of Sanda (men and women alike) were gathered together on the high cliffs on which it is built to watch the ships endeavouring to run for shelter to the nearest harbour. About half-past three a thin blue line of steam appeared on the horizon. This rose and fell. Then a

steamer, gallantly holding her own amid the mighty mass of foaming water, grew visible. Now but her funnel was seen, now her decks. The excitement on the cliffs grew intense. The waves seemed to sweep right over her, but still she went on—on past the wild headland of Sanda—on, prayed many a woman present, safe to port. As she disappeared there rose a cry—a cry that rang through the crowd. Philip Hayward, who was among the watchers of the sea, turned round when he heard it, and as he did so found himself face to face with Isabel Trevor. There she stood, the rain beating and dashing on her golden hair and streaming down her lovely features. She was pale and excited. It was so grand, she thought, watching this death struggle with the waves.

Unconsciously, almost, the tutor drew nearer to her. Then again rang that cry—the cry from the crowd. “Another ship in sight! Look no’ard! Another ship labouring in the sea!”

"She's a yacht," said a sailor who was standing near Hayward, inspecting her through a long telescope that he held in his strong brown hands.

"She'll never live through it," muttered an old fisherman, shaking his grey head.

Everyone on the cliffs now saw the yacht and her fearful danger. She was driving rapidly on—fleeing, as it were, before her devouring foe. Then, suddenly, when every eye was fixed upon her, she veered round. She had been running, apparently, for the nearest harbour ; now she turned and began drifting, drifting fast upon the rocks below.

What a cry there was then ! The women threw their aprons over their faces and ran backwards and forwards, screaming and gesticulating, while the men stood silent and pale.

"They've lost power over her," presently said the sailor with the telescope, to Hayward.

"Her time's come," said the old fisherman.  
"God be merciful to the poor souls on board !"

The yacht was now rapidly approaching the cliffs. But before she struck, before the fatal, grinding, crushing blow could come, a great sea lapped over her, and then another. But she rose from the mass of waters, though an appalling shriek from the crowd told that all believed her fate was certain. Then a third sea struck her, and this time she went down to rise no more.

She disappeared so suddenly that she might have been a phantom ship. Hayward rubbed his eyes. She had been there a moment ago, now she was not there. It was like a dream. Isabel Trevor gave a cry, and the crowd swayed backwards and forwards, and pressed nearer to the edge of the cliffs. Every eye was fixed upon the sea ; the sea had just swallowed up the ship and her living crew.

## CHAPTER III.

SIR GEORGE HAMILTON.

As the crowd swayed backwards and forwards, after the yacht sank, Philip Hayward found himself pressed nearer to Isabel Trevor and her companion, Hilda Marston. Hilda Marston was crying, and praying silently for those who, even at that moment, must be struggling in their death agony; and Isabel Trevor, with parted lips and wide-open eyes, was gazing intently upon the sea.

It was a moment of extreme excitement. The yacht had gone down so near the land that a good swimmer could easily, in an ordinary sea, have swum to shore. But in this raging, boiling mass of waters, there seemed no hope. No hope! And yet with

a cry—a shout rather—that rose above the storm, men began to call out that now they saw a man—a living man—wrestling with the waves !

For a moment he was visible—and then—O God ! he disappeared. The next moment the head rose once more, and a white, despairing face looked upwards. Isabel Trevor saw that look, and a sudden passion of excitement seemed to seize her.

“Can nothing be done ?” she cried, loudly and wildly. “Are you men ?” she went on, running forward to a group of fishermen who, in their oilskin coats and caps, were standing near. “Will you let a human creature perish before you ? Will none of you risk your lives to save him ?” And she pointed eagerly, as she said these last words, to the sea ; and as she did so, her eyes met Philip Hayward’s.

“I will, lady,” he said, and he stepped forward, pale and daring.

“You are a brave man,” she answered quickly.

"You are a madman," said one of the fishermen, roughly. "No soul could live in a sea like yon."

"I will try," said Hayward firmly, and as he spoke he flung off his coat and boots, and then with one look into Isabel's face—a look of farewell—he began hastily to descend the wet and slippery pathway down the cliffs that led towards the sea.

"Thou'st sent him to his death," said the same fisherman who had spoken before, glancing at Isabel.

But she made no answer, she was watching the tutor's descent ; watching him struggling down the dangerous, narrow way ; watching him, when he reached the great brown rocks below, stand one moment still on one of them, and then, seizing his opportunity, plunge the next boldly into the sea.

As he did so, Hilda Marston gave a cry—a cry echoed by many of the women present.

"He will be drowned," said Hilda, with a sort of moan, and she put her handkerchief over her face to shut out the scene.



"If he is," answered Isabel, "he will die like a brave man, and not like a coward," and she looked tauntingly at the group of fishermen, who moved with a sort of uneasy consciousness beneath her contemptuous glance.

"Let's gan down wi' ropes ; maybe we can chance to help him," murmured one. "He's a brave lad," said another. "He'll never see the shore again," muttered a third.

In the meantime Hayward was resolutely swimming onward, and a sort of momentary lull came over the mighty waves as he did so. He knew he had gone forth to almost certain death, but she would see him die.

"She will see me die—she will know how I loved her then," he thought.

This, at least, was the impulse that had sent him into the boiling surf. But though it seemed a sort of forlorn hope, he did not forget that each stroke of his vigorous arm brought him nearer to the man struggling in the sea.

There he was. Hayward saw the dark head amid the blinding spray ; amid the huge

waves that swept over them, that parted them one moment with a great yawning gulf, that flung them the next close to each other's arms.

At last Hayward made a dash forward, and caught the man's hand.

"There ! rest it on my shoulder," he said. "Don't put your arms round my neck. Lean your hand on my shoulder, and I will try to save you."

"I am done," said the man, choking and gasping.

Then came another lull in the waves.

"Take time to breathe," said Hayward, himself drawing a long breath. "Hold on fast, and we may yet get safe to shore."

The man whom he addressed was almost exhausted. But he was bold and brave, and he saw that his one chance of life lay in obeying Hayward's directions. He therefore rested his arm on Hayward, drew his breath, and then together they turned towards the shore.

The sea swept them on—swept them on

in the great waves in which they were powerless, and was going to sweep them, Hayward saw, against the huge, jagged rocks that were standing out hard and cold to give them a cruel welcome. When he saw this, he made an effort. "This poor soul may wish to live," he thought, glancing at the white set face so near his own, and he put out his arm in the hope of shielding his companion.

He heard a cheer as he did so—a cheer that seemed quite near to him somehow—and then came a shock, a frightful sense of pain, and a rush and din of waters in his ears. After this he could recall nothing more. His head, in fact, had struck on the rocks as well as his arm. But, before the fierce waves could carry back their prey, one of the fishermen, who had gone down the cliffs in the hope of helping him, and who was standing watching with a rope round his waist, darted forward and caught Hayward by the arm. There was a brief struggle, but the hardy fisherman was used to the blinding spray, and Hayward (with the man he had

saved clinging to him with the grim clutch of despair) the next moment was drawn alive upon the rocks.

What a cheer was given then—a cheer from the cliffs! Men ran down the slippery path at the risk of their lives, and one woman went also. This was Isabel Trevor. There she stood, pale, determined, and beautiful, looking at the tutor's death-like face, who was now lying stretched out on the rocks insensible. Crouching near him on his knees, and leaning against some of the fishermen, as if he were quite exhausted, was the man he had saved. But Isabel never looked at him. She was examining Hayward attentively, and presently she stooped down, and laid her hand over his heart.

"Is he much hurt?" she said; and the fisherman who had caught him by the arm as he was being swept back into the sea, and who was the same man who had spoken to Isabel on the cliffs, now answered her roughly enough.

"Ay, it's as I told thee," he said, looking

at Isabel with his bronzed handsome face ;  
“ thou’s sent him to his death.”

“ Where is he injured ? ” she asked coldly, lifting herself up.

“ On the head,” said the fisherman, “ and his arm’s smashed.” As he spoke he lifted up one of Hayward’s powerless hands.

As he did so, Isabel bent down again and took the tutor’s cold hand.

“ Mr. Hayward,” she said, “ Mr. Hayward ! ” And somehow to his dulled senses her siren voice crept, for he opened his eyes and looked at her ; looked at her like the dumb beasts look when in deadly pain.

“ Are you better ? ” said Isabel, and she took a flask containing spirit from the fisherman’s hand and held it to Hayward’s lips, and as she did so a sort of life seemed to creep into his veins.

“ I—I—thank you,” he murmured, and then his eyes closed again.

“ Have him carried up the cliff at once,” said Isabel, looking round with her imperious air. “ Where is the doctor ? Why is he not

here ? Let him have everything he requires. I am Miss Trevor, of the Hall."

She need not have made this announcement. They all knew her, these rough, bronzed men ; knew by reputation and name the haughty beauty who never went near their squalid homes ; who lived as far apart from them as if she were in another world. But she was the squire's daughter, and as such must be obeyed ; and so, as she turned away with her proud air, the fishermen, in their careless, slouching manner, prepared to carry Hayward up the cliff.

As they were lifting him in their arms, Isabel Trevor for the first time looked at the man the tutor had saved. He was still in a state of extreme exhaustion, and was eagerly drinking some spirit that a fisherman was giving him. Isabel's eyes fell on his hands as he did so ; on the white nervous hands, on the carefully kept nails, on the ring on the fourth finger, on which armorial bearings were deeply cut. They were the hands of a gentleman, and from the hands Isabel's eyes travelled to

the face. A pale face, with handsome features and black brows, and with a heavy moustache shading the strong, resolute mouth and jaws.

"Are you much hurt?" said Isabel, addressing him.

Then the man looked up, and when he saw her, with the instincts of a gentleman, he tried to rise.

"I am completely exhausted," he said in a faint voice. "Am I the only one saved?" he asked the next moment.

"Ay, master," answered the fisherman who was giving him the spirit, "and if it hadn't been for yon tutor lad at the schule, that they're carrying up the cliff there, thou would have gone with the rest."

"What was the name of your ship? They were saying it was a yacht?" went on Isabel.

"Yes, the yacht Endymion," answered the rescued man. "I was her owner—she was a good little ship, but no yacht could live in such a gale."

"There's not been the like these thirty years," said the fisherman shaking his head.

"What is your name?" continued Isabel. "You had better be taken at once to the Hall—to my father's house, Sanda Hall."

"I thank you," said the gentleman, "and I shall indeed be grateful for some friendly shelter. My name is Hamilton," he added, "Sir George Hamilton; and will you tell me the name of the brave young man who saved my life?"

"He is Mr. Hayward, the tutor at the school here," answered Isabel. And then with the innate coquetry of her nature she went on, "I saw you—I entreated Mr. Hayward to save you."

"I thank you," said Sir George Hamilton again, and this time he looked at Isabel's beautiful face.

Shall I describe her as she appeared to him then, standing on the brown, bare rocks, with the storm raging around her, and the spray and rain beating on her golden hair? She was not pale now, but fair and blooming. Her large, restless, strangely-tinted eyes, with the dark eyelashes and brows, were smiling and



soft. The excitement was over. She never thought of the men who had just died. She was thinking how one had gone out and risked his life at her bidding, and here was another man who, perhaps, would become a victim to her beauty, too. This was what Isabel Trevor liked. She felt herself a kind of heroine because she had run down the dangerous, slippery pathway from the cliff; because she had sent Hayward out on his almost fatal errand; because she was standing there in the wind and the rain, where no other woman had ventured to go.

"And you came here," said Sir George, looking round at the bleak spot on which they were standing, "to try to help some of my poor crew?"

"I came because I could not bear to do nothing," answered Isabel. "It was dreadful only to watch. But," she added, "let the men assist you up the cliff, and then in a few minutes you will be at Sanda Hall."

The shipwrecked man was only too glad to avail himself of her offer. He was "almost

done," as he himself expressed it, and with difficulty was dragged up the steep cliff by the fishermen, followed by Isabel Trevor. When they nearly reached the top, Isabel saw her father standing there watching her, looking pale and agitated, and he came hastily forward.

"Isabel," he said, "what on earth induced you to risk your life as you have done?"

"I could not keep still," she answered. "Papa," she added, pointing to the exhausted stranger who was supported by the fishermen, "this is Sir George Hamilton, the owner of the yacht that has gone down—the gentleman Mr. Hayward has saved, and I have asked him to go to the Hall."

"Certainly," said the squire, courteously. "I congratulate you, sir, on your happy escape." And Mr. Trevor held out his hand to Sir George Hamilton.

But by this time Sir George was nearly in a fainting condition. He was frightfully pale, and unable to walk, and Mr. Trevor, seeing this, at once despatched a man standing by to

the Hall for a carriage, and Sir George was placed in it, while the squire and Isabel stood by his side.

The women present now divided their tearful sympathy between the rescued man and the tutor who had rescued him. Hayward at this time was being carried to the parsonage, and Isabel heard all around comments on his conduct.

"Ay, it's cost him his life," one fine young woman, with a red handkerchief tied round her comely face, was saying.

"He had a sad look, like those who gan young," answered a weather-beaten matron.

"Is young Hayward killed?" asked the squire, who also overheard their remarks.

"They say he's nigh to death, squire," answered the comely young woman with a sigh.

"Indeed! I regret to hear it," said Mr. Trevor.

"It is an exaggeration, papa," said Isabel. "He spoke to me when he was lying on the rocks."

But now let us leave the group who were waiting for the squire's carriage and follow those who were carrying Hayward to the parsonage. Amongst these was the parson. He had not been on the cliffs when the tutor had volunteered to endeavour to save the man struggling in the sea, nor yet when Hayward had succeeded in bringing the one survivor of the crew of the yacht to the shore. But he had arrived there just when the fishermen bore the tutor (who was then again apparently insensible) from the rocks below. The Rev. Matthew's grief and consternation at the sight were naturally extreme.

"My dear lad, what has happened?" he cried, in dismay, as his eyes fell on the tutor's pale face and out-stretched form, as the fishermen laid him for a moment on the grass. "Oh, Hayward, my dear!" And the parson knelt down and took one of the tutor's cold hands in his, and began tenderly chafing it.

Then a dozen voices told what had happened, and the Rev. Matthew's kindly heart

was yet more moved when he heard the tale.

"He should not have done it," he said. "My boy, my brave boy, look at your old friend! Don't you know me, Hayward?"

But no words came from the tutor's white lips. He lay there still and motionless, breathing somewhat heavily, and the Rev. Matthew grew even more alarmed as he watched him.

"He's hurt on the head," said one of the fishermen.

"God grant his brain is not injured," answered the Rev. Matthew, uneasily. "Run, my man," he went on to one of the men standing near, "for the doctor, and bring a door from Jimmy Watson's, the joiner's. He must be carried carefully home."

In a few minutes the parson's directions were both complied with. The doctor, a tall, gaunt Scotchman, arrived on the cliffs, and having felt Hayward's pulse, pronounced that he must be taken home before anything could be done. The tutor, accordingly, was lifted

on to the door procured from the village joiner's, and then carefully carried to the parsonage, the Rev. Matthew walking by his side as they went along.

As the procession entered the parsonage gateway and crossed the rain-soaked grass-plot in front of the house, Mrs. Irvine was standing at the door looking eagerly out. She had heard the report of the tutor's injuries, and stood there facing the raging tempest in her anxiety on his behalf. What a gaunt figure she was! So white, so thin, even so ghastly, with her large features, sunken black eyes, and white, half-open mouth, which habitually showed her upper teeth. She might have been an animated corpse, so deathly did she look, and even her voice was shrill and unearthly.

"Is he dead, Matthew?" she cried, as soon as she caught sight of the tutor's pale face.

"He is dead!" shrieked a voice behind her, and a plump little figure fell suddenly backwards.

This was Amelia Irvine, the only surviv-

ing child of the Rev. Matthew and his wife. She was a stout, rosy girl, with thick waist, and thick wrists and ankles, and a face that could not perhaps have been called absolutely plain. She had been standing behind her mother, watching for the tutor's arrival, and when she saw his prostrate figure carried by the fishermen on the door, and his white uncovered face, she cried, "He is dead!" and fell at once without warning back into the arms of little Ned Marston, who was standing there also.

"Don't, Miss Melia!" exclaimed Ned, as the unexpected dead weight fell upon him. "I can't hold you—I can't indeed."

"He is dead!" again cried Miss Amelia, stiffening her ankles rigidly.

"Please sit on the umbrella stand," pleaded Ned, "for I can't hold you—I can't indeed." And suiting his action to his words, he allowed Miss Amelia to fall heavily on the hall oil-cloth.

"Cruel," murmured Miss Amelia, closing her eyes and becoming more rigid still.

"Don't make a fool of yourself, Amelia Shadwell," said Mrs. Irvine, looking round, as the sound of her daughter's sudden descent reached her ear. "If Hayward's gone, you can't bring him back by fainting and that kind of nonsense, and if he isn't you had best get up and try to do something to help him."

"Oh!——" groaned Amelia Shadwell from the oil-cloth. But here it ought to be mentioned that Shadwell was Mrs. Irvine's maiden name, and she had insisted that each of her children should successively bear it. All the little Thomas Shadwells, and Matthew Shadwells and Jane Shadwells, and various other little Shadwells, were "gone," as Mrs. Irvine expressed it; but Amelia Shadwell remained, and her mother almost invariably, in addressing her, gave her her full baptismal name.

"Get up, Miss Amelia, please do," whispered little Ned Marston, who felt rather contrite for having let her go so suddenly down. "You'll get all wet if you don't when the men come in. He's not dead, I dare



say," he continued, soothingly, "and if you can't get up, let me roll you to one side." And accordingly Master Ned rolled Amelia into a convenient corner near the umbrella-stand, while her father and the fishermen carried the tutor into the hall.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SIR GEORGE'S OFFER.

WHEN Hayward's injuries were examined, he was found to have severely fractured his right arm and his wrist. The most serious injury, however, which he had sustained was on his head. His forehead had apparently struck on the rocks, and for two days afterwards he lay in a state of semi-insensibility.

During these days a message of inquiry came morning and evening from the Hall. "Sir George Hamilton and Mr. Trevor wish to know how Mr. Hayward is," regularly asked the Hall footman, when he rang at the parsonage bell.

The dwellers in the cottages near, among which the footman had to pass before he

reached the parsonage, regarded these visits with sympathy; with sympathy for the young man who was lying ill in their midst, and also for the stranger who had come so perilously amongst them. Some interest was excited also, when a gentlemanly, pleasant looking man of about forty, arrived at the village in a cab, two days after the wreck of the yacht, and stopped at the public-house to ask the nearest way to Sanda Hall, where Sir George Hamilton was at present staying. After the gentleman had received the proper directions, and had driven to the Hall, the driver and the cab returned to the public-house. Then it came out that this visitor was Mr. Hannaway, a lawyer, and Sir George Hamilton's man of business, Sir George being a very rich man, the cabman had been informed.

Still, though these things interested the fishing population of Sanda, they did not create in them the intense curiosity and love of gossip which they would almost certainly have done in a country village. Whether the solemn dirges that are for ever sounding in

their ears, that break over so many unseen graves of friends and kindred, affect them with a sort of solemnity, there is no doubt that, after the heyday of youth is past, these people are, as a class, of a grave and quiet deportment, the women as a rule being hard-working, sober, and virtuous.

When, therefore, on the day after his arrival at Sanda Hall, Sir George Hamilton's man of business was seen wending his way past the dilapidated cottages of the fishermen in search of the parsonage, there was no unseemly staring at the stranger.

The women, as usual, were to be seen standing at their door-ways knitting, dressed in their short blue bedgowns pinned back, and their short blue flannel petticoats, fully displaying the blue woollen stockings beneath, and the low leather shoes.

They glanced up as Mr. Hannaway passed.

"He'll be the gentleman from the Hall," said one woman.

"Ay," answered another grave matron, and that was all.

"The lad yonder, they say, is better, then?" said the first woman who had spoken, with a nod of her head to indicate the parsonage.

"The Lord has been merciful to him," replied the second woman; and they both went on industriously with the blue, half-finished woollen stockings in their hands.

In the meanwhile, Mr. Hannaway had reached the parsonage, and had been ushered into the parson's study.

This was the smallest room in the house. A little back sitting-room, dark and shabby, in which the Rev. Matthew wrote his sermons, smoked his pipe, and spent his serenest hours of peace.

He was not there, however, when the prosperous man of business was ushered into it, and the prosperous man of business looked round with amused dismay at the signs of poverty it contained. Worn was the carpet, worn the black hair-seating of the chairs, and most worn of all the comfortable arm-chair in which the Rev. Matthew spent so many hours.

Mr. Hannaway had not been used to this kind of thing. "The poor man must be starving," he thought, and he was, therefore, quite astonished when the genial, pleasant-faced parson entered the shabby little room.

He (the Rev. Matthew) held Mr. Hannaway's card in his hand.

"Mr. Hannaway?" he said, and Mr. Hannaway smiled and bowed, and then the two shook hands.

"I have called," began Mr. Hannaway, "at the request of Sir George Hamilton. He wishes me to express to the young gentleman who saved his life, and who I understand is in your establishment, his deep sense of gratitude, and also to make inquiries about his state of health, and will be glad to know if any further medical advice is advisable."

"Then, I'm thankful to tell ye I don't think it is," answered the Rev. Matthew in his sweet-toned, half-pathetic voice. "My friend, Dr. MacRay, here, told me this morning that he hopes that the dear lad will

now pull through ; and I feel a happy man, I can tell ye, for the news."

"I am, indeed, pleased to hear it," said Mr. Hannaway. "His condition has excited the greatest anxiety in the mind of Sir George Hamilton, who is in a state of great mental depression, also, at the loss of the whole of his poor crew."

"It was, indeed, terrible," said the Rev. Matthew, with a feeling sigh.

"It was a fine yacht, the *Endymion*," went on Mr. Hannaway. "Altogether it has been a sad business, and Sir George seems to have taken it completely to heart."

"No wonder, no wonder," said the Rev. Matthew.

"Sir George further instructed me to say," continued Mr. Hannaway, "that anything that he can do to promote this young man's future—I mean the young gentleman who saved Sir George's life—he will most gladly do. Sir George, you know," added Mr. Hannaway with a smile, "is a rich man, and can afford to be a generous one."

"I shall tell the dear lad," answered the Rev. Matthew. "And this, I may tell ye, Mr. Hannaway," he went on, "a finer, braver young fellow there does not breathe. He's a gentleman by birth, too," he continued, "for his father was an officer in the 84th—a lieutenant—and married when out in India the governess of his colonel, and then died, poor fellow, of sunstroke, a year after. He has a sorrowful history, you see. A widowed mother, with her scanty pension barely sufficient to keep in life, and this one son. Well, he has an uncle—some sort of a merchant in London, I believe—and this Mr. Moxam educated young Hayward, and sent him to the University of Durham, under the idea that he might go into the Church. But the mother fell ill, and what could the poor lad do? He left college, and accepted a tutorship, so that he might help her, which he does—sending her indeed almost all his scanty earnings."

"It is highly commendable," said Mr. Hannaway.



"Yes, but the young fellow frets. I'm such a poor man myself that I can do nothing for him, though I love him as a son, but I know he is dissatisfied with his position in life, and pines for different work. Therefore, you see, if Sir George Hamilton would push him on——"

"I am sure he will," replied Mr. Hannaway, as the Rev. Matthew made an expressive pause. "Sir George will see him himself when he is better, but of this I am certain, that any profession is now open to him."

"Is Sir George a young man?" asked the parson.

"It depends upon what you call a young man," answered Mr. Hannaway, with a smile.

"I call him a young man, because he is two years younger than I am. He is thirty-eight, in fact."

"And is he married?" went on the Rev. Matthew.

At this question a faint colour passed over Mr. Hannaway's good-looking, pleasant face.

"I—believe not," he said, with some hesitation.

"Well, he had a near escape from death," said the Rev. Matthew, quickly, who now saw that he had asked an unfortunate question.

"Yes, indeed," answered Mr. Hannaway, rising, "and he fully appreciates the courage of Mr.—Hayward, isn't it?"

"Yes, Hayward. Philip Hayward."

"Tell Mr. Philip Hayward, then, that Sir George will call upon him before he leaves this part of the country; and in the meanwhile assure him that whatever profession he fixes upon he may depend on Sir George's influence and purse." And Mr. Hannaway, having given this assurance, shook the Rev. Matthew's hand, and then courteously took his leave.

After he had gone, the Rev. Matthew proceeded to the tutor's sick room. There he found his wife and his daughter Amelia. Amelia had spent the last two days in crying and in making beef tea; but now, as the tutor was supposed to be better, she had dried her

eyes, and was making beef tea more energetically than ever.

"Pa," she said, turning round her rosy, fat, common-place face, as the Rev. Matthew entered the room, "he has taken a cupful" (this was of beef tea). "Isn't that nice? I made it myself, and I know it's good."

"Yes, my dear," answered the Rev. Matthew, glancing at the tutor's pale face lying on the pillow; "but you must not forget that he is to be kept perfectly quiet."

"Oh! I won't forget," said Amelia, gushingly; "but though he is to be kept quiet, he's to be kept up, too, and beef tea's the thing to keep him up, isn't it, mamma?"

"Amelia Shadwell, don't let your spirits run away with you," replied Mrs. Irvine in a ghostly voice. "You are always up or down, isn't she, Hayward?"

At this appeal a faint smile passed over the tutor's face.

"I have had a gentleman inquiring after you, Hayward," said the Rev. Matthew.

"Who was it?" asked Mrs. Irvine in her hollow tone.

"I think he must be Sir George Hamilton's agent or lawyer," answered the Rev. Matthew. "This is his card." And he placed Mr. Hannaway's card in the long thin hands of his gaunt partner.

"And what did he say?" she asked, after she had examined it.

"Oh! well——" hesitated the Rev. Matthew, "Hayward ought to hear that first. He spoke very generously—he made a sort of proposal."

"Matthew," said Mrs. Irvine, "if he said anything particular, tell it now. You will tell it afterwards, you know that, for you can keep nothing."

"Well, my dear, Hayward will tell you himself by and bye," said the Rev. Matthew, meekly.

"Amelia Shadwell," said Mrs. Irvine, rising from her chair, and addressing her daughter, "come away at once. Your papa wants us out of the room, I see that. Hay-

ward wants us out of the room, I see that also ; and I mean, therefore, to go out of the room, and you must come, too."

"Another brewing will be ready in a quarter of an hour, Mr. Hayward," said Amelia Shadwell, glancing tenderly to the bed, and alluding to her beef tea, "and in a quarter of an hour I will bring you a fresh cupful." And then with another tender glance she followed her mother from the room.

When his wife and daughter were gone, the Rev. Matthew proceeded to deliver Mr. Hannaway's message to the tutor, and as he did so a flush came over the pale face on the pillow, and a new light into the dulled eyes.

"He said this," said Hayward, as the Rev. Matthew paused. "He said——"

"That any profession is now open to you, my dear lad," answered the kind parson, taking the tutor's hand. "This offer may part us ; but though I grieve for this, I rejoice at the same time at your good fortune."

As the Rev. Matthew said this, the flush deepened on Hayward's face. Of what was he thinking? As wild and foolish a thought as ever crossed a young man's brain. He was thinking, "I may rise now—I may win Isabel now"—Isabel, who thought as little of him as she did of the countless grains of sea sand lying on the shore!

## CHAPTER V.

### AT SANDA HALL.

THE same day that Mr. Hannaway called the parsonage, Sir George Hamilton for the first time appeared among the family at Sanda Hall. His host had visited him in his bedroom, and the village doctor had visited him ; and after Mr. Hannaway had arrived, that gentleman had naturally spent most of his time with his patron. But the ladies had never seen the guest who had come so strangely into the household since the day of the storm, when he had been once assisted from the carriage to his room.

But though they had not seen him, they had frequently talked of him, and Isabel Trevor had not scrupled to make inquiries.

about his private history from his man of business. Mr. Hannaway, however, gave only very guarded replies.

"Is he married?" asked Miss Trevor, carelessly.

"No," answered Mr. Hannaway, gravely.

"How strange!" said Miss Trevor. "A man of his age, too. Is there any romance in the case?"

"Most men have their romances, you know, Miss Trevor," replied Mr. Hannaway, smiling.

"What is Sir George's, then?" asked Miss Trevor.

The lawyer shook his head.

"How can I tell you?" he answered. "If Sir George has one, he is not a man to confide it to his lawyer; and I do not even know that he has one."

"I shall have to ask him," said Miss Trevor, throwing back her beautiful head.

"And who could refuse to tell Miss Trevor anything she asked?" said Mr. Hannaway, bowing; and so the conver-



sation about Sir George's romance ended for the present.

But Isabel felt curious about their guest, and grew impatient of the days that he spent in seclusion. Her father had pronounced him to be a handsome and gentlemanly man, and she herself had admired him during their brief interview. "How tiresome it is," Isabel thought, "of him to stay in his own room! I hate tiresome people."

But she did not tell him this when he appeared downstairs. She was standing in the drawing-room when he entered it, engaged in what was a favourite occupation of hers—the arranging of flowers. That is, she took a fancy for doing this occasionally, as she took fancies for other things. When she took a fancy, she was wrapped up in it for a little while, and then another fancy succeeded. This day she was quite immersed in her flowers. She lifted them up, held them together to judge of their effect, and then put them down again. She had a great

bunch of gorgeously-tinted camelias in her hand as Sir George came into the drawing-room, and though she heard him enter, and guessed who it was, she did not turn her head, but bent down over the flowers.

She made a splendid picture. A woman about whose beauty there could be no doubt; a woman with a tall, shapely form, dressed with rare taste, and with a sort of strange grace in every attitude of her supple figure.

She waited until Sir George was close to her, and then looked quickly round, with a smile that was intended to win his admiration. But the man who approached her was in no mood to give it. He looked gloomy, almost sullen; and as he placed his hand in the one she held towards him, he did not even return her smile.

"I have come to thank you, Miss Trevor," he said, with grave courtesy, "for your great kindness to me."

"What kindness?" asked Isabel, with another bright smile.

"Need I answer that question?" said Sir George, fixing his eyes on her face.

He was thinking how wonderfully beautiful she was. He had only a vague recollection of her appearance as she stood on the bare brown rocks, just after he had been rescued from the sea by Hayward on the day of the storm, and he had scarcely ever thought of her since. But just now he was in a bitter mood. "She is beautiful," he was reflecting, "but what does it matter? She will only bring greater misery into the world than most of her accursed sex."

"Do you mean by my 'great kindness' that I urged the young man to try to save you?" went on Isabel, still smiling, and interrupting Sir George's thoughts. "If you do, you need not thank me. What I did, I did selfishly, for I could not bear to see a human creature perish without some effort being made to save him."

"Then, as I am that 'human creature,' I suppose I owe you some thanks, don't I?"

asked Sir George, with a sort of cynicism in his tone that Isabel instantly detected.

"Yes," she said sharply, "for life is a boon, is it not?"

"Say rather that death is a dread," answered Sir George, with a sort of shudder.

Isabel turned her head away.

"I never think of death," she said. "I love life; I am young; death seems far away from me."

"No one can say that," said Sir George, moodily.

"I say it," answered Isabel, in her bright, defiant way. "I mean to live—I mean to enjoy life, and to live a long, long life."

Sir George Hamilton made no answer; and as he stood there, silent and gloomy, Isabel looked steadily in his face.

He was a handsome man, with a pale, slightly olive-tinted skin, high regular features, and a dark moustache. He was about thirty-eight or nine years of age at this time, and was tall and well-formed. Altogether he was a remarkable-looking man; remarkable for his

good looks and for his proud and distinguished bearing ; and Isabel Trevor was much struck with his whole appearance.

“And are you better?” she asked, with interest. “Have you recovered from the frightful shock?”

“Yes, I am better,” he answered ; “and I am truly pleased to hear from the doctor this morning that Mr. Hayward, the brave young man that saved my life, is also now pronounced to be out of danger.”

“So papa told me,” said Isabel. “Yes, I am glad—it was a brave action.”

“A very brave action,” said Sir George.

“But I knew he was a good swimmer when I implored him to try to save you,” continued Isabel. “He swam out and brought in a woman’s body quite lately.”

“Indeed! Well, I have sent Hannaway to see him. In any way that I can push him on in life I shall only be too ready to do so. He is a gentleman, I suppose?”

“There is some legend to that effect, I believe, in the village,” answered Isabel, care-

lessly, "but I have never paid much attention to it. Ah, here is Miss Marston," she went on, as Hilda Marston now entered the drawing-room. "Miss Marston," she continued, "Sir George Hamilton is inquiring about Mr. Hayward, the tutor. I tell him I know little of him, excepting that he has the reputation of being a good swimmer, but perhaps you know more about him? Miss Marston's little brother is one of his pupils, Sir George."

Sir George bowed to Miss Marston when Isabel mentioned her name, and then again when she imparted the information that Miss Marston's brother was one of Mr. Hayward's pupils.

"Then perhaps you can tell me something about him, Miss Marston?" said Sir George, addressing Hilda, who coloured slightly at the question.

"Do you mean about himself, or his family?" she asked, in a pleasant, low-toned voice.

"About both, if you can give me any

information," answered Sir George. "I am naturally much interested in him. I owe him a debt I can never repay."

"Yes, indeed," said Hilda Marston.

"Do you know him well?" asked Sir George.

"Not very," answered Hilda, "but I do know him, and—he is a gentleman. His father was an officer, I believe, and died of sunstroke out in India, and left a young widow and one little boy, who is now Mr. Hayward. That is all I know, I think," she went on with a sort of sweet modesty of manner which was habitual to her; "but I believe he is very nice—and you know he is very brave."

"How do you know he is very nice, Miss Marston?" said Isabel, with a little scoffing laugh. "Do you mean nice-looking, nice-mannered, or what? I hate the term 'nice' when applied to a man. I can imagine a nice tame cat, but not a nice man."

Hilda Marston looked annoyed.

"I mean," she said, "that he seems agreeable."

"I wish I had noticed this paragon of perfection before," continued Isabel, with another laugh. "Is he very good looking? I really forget."

"He is clever looking," answered Hilda Marston.

"Which is much better than ordinary beauty," said Sir George. "A clever face is always an attractive one."

"I think so, too," said Hilda.

"I don't, then," said Isabel. "A handsome face to me is always an attractive one." And she looked at Sir George with her beautiful eyes as she spoke.

After this the conversation about the tutor was dropped. Isabel volunteered to show Sir George her conservatories, and led him thither without asking Hilda Marston to accompany them.

"Who is that young lady?" asked Sir George, when he found himself beneath the gorgeously flower-festooned glass roof of one of the conservatories, which was filled to profusion with the rarest and choicest plants.



"My companion, Miss Marston," answered Isabel. "I was lonely here after I returned from school, for there is so little society that I care about, and papa therefore proposed for me to have a companion. She is a clergyman's daughter, and is very useful to me."

"And you never had a sister?" asked Sir George.

"Yes," said Isabel, "but she died when we were children. She would have been twenty-one now—one year younger than I am."

"And you are twenty-two?" said Sir George, looking at Isabel.

"Yes, twenty-two," she answered, laughing, and showing her white teeth. "An old woman of twenty-two!"

She was standing, as she said this, beneath a long trailing festoon of some bright green creeper, and she saw that Sir George was admiring her. This was what she lived for; but another idea crept into her heart at this moment.

"He is rich, he is well-born," she thought.

“Why should I not marry him? I must marry some day; why not marry Sir George Hamilton?”

There was a marvellously subtle grace about this woman which fascinated men. She was a born coquette, and had the power somehow of making every man think that she admired him. Had anyone told Sir George Hamilton that he would spend two hours this day with any woman amid her flowers, when he rose sullen and desponding in the morning, he would have laughed them to scorn. Yet he did spend them. He sat down by Isabel's side and talked to her amid the perfumed air. He was not very communicative about his past life, though. He had spent the last five or six years abroad, he told Isabel, and that was about all the information that she gained.

“In what country?” she asked.

“In many countries,” he answered. “I have wandered to and fro upon the earth, Miss Trevor.”

“Have you been in Spain?” said Isabel.

“Yes,” answered Sir George, and a flush

passed for a moment over his usually pale face. "Why do you ask?" he inquired the next minute.

"You remind me of Spain, somehow," she answered. "There is something romantic even in this prosaic age, I think, about Spain."

"But there is nothing romantic about me," said Sir George.

"Is there not?" said Isabel, softly. "Ah, you cannot tell." And she gave a little sigh.

"It's best to keep out of romances," said Sir George; rising from his seat by her side. "They are dangerous things, ending sometimes——" And he hesitated.

"In tragedies?" said Isabel.

"Or comedies," went on Sir George, with affected carelessness of manner.

"Tragedies or comedies," repeated Isabel, rising also, "in which shall we act our parts? Well, we shall know some day, shall we not, Sir George, before the curtain falls?" And with a slight laugh she turned away.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A FAREWELL WORD.

THE next few days Isabel Trevor spent in trying to fascinate Sir George Hamilton. She was an adept in the art, but Sir George was either cool or wary. At least he gave no signs of being an easy victim, and yet Isabel felt sure that he admired her. But he was gloomy and taciturn, at times, in spite of all her attractions. He spoke, too, of leaving Sanda ; of leaving as soon as he had seen the young man who had saved his life, and Isabel began to be somewhat doubtful about her success.

Mr. Hannaway left the Hall the day after his visit to the parsonage. He had professional business to attend to, he said,

when Mr. Trevor hospitably asked him to stay.

"But I dare say we shall meet at Massam?" said Mr. Hannaway, pleasantly. Now Massam was a place of Sir George Hamilton's, in Yorkshire, to which he had heard the baronet invite their present host during the evening before.

"Yes, I hope to see Mr. Trevor at Massam," said Sir George, who was standing by.

"And don't you hope to see Miss Trevor at Massam?" asked Isabel coquettishly, who was also standing near.

"Yes, if Miss Trevor pleases to come," answered Sir George, looking at her with a smile; "but there is no lady to entertain you there."

"I hate ladies in general," said Isabel, tossing back her head. "I get on far better with men. Ladies in general are jealous, narrow-minded, and spiteful. Yes, Sir George, you need not try to make that excuse," she added, smiling more coquettishly still.

"I do not wish to make excuses," he said. "If you will come, of course I shall be delighted to see you."

"Miss Hilda Marston can accompany my daughter," said Mr. Trevor, in his pompous fashion. He was not very brilliant, but he had penetration to see through his daughter's design, and he perfectly approved of it. He, in fact, was very anxious that Isabel should marry, because he wished and intended to marry again himself. But he knew that he could not do so with any chance of domestic comfort if his daughter was still unwedded. Sir George Hamilton he believed to be a suitable person to marry Isabel, and he therefore cultivated the baronet's intimacy, and was very cordial (for him) in his manner to their guest. But a painful episode suddenly ended Sir George's stay at Sanda Hall. This was the news which was conveyed to him, a day or two after the conversation about Isabel's visit to Massam, that the sea had once more given up some of its dead. Two bodies had been washed on shore at

Sanda, and they were supposed to be part of the crew of Sir George's lost yacht, the *Endymion*. Sir George could scarcely control his emotion when he heard of this. His pale dark face grew paler, and his lips quivered nervously in spite of his efforts to appear calm. Isabel Trevor, who was with him at the time when the squire told him the news, looked at him in absolute surprise.

"How strange he is!" she said to Hilda Marston afterwards. "Why, he knew that these poor men were all dead, so why should he be so agitated at their bodies being cast up? It is rather unmanly, I think."

"It naturally must painfully remind him of what was so nearly his own fate," replied Hilda.

"But it's folly always to be thinking of tiresome things," said Isabel, carelessly.

"But death is such a solemn thing," said Hilda, and she went to the window and gave a sigh as she looked out.

This girl had had a very different experience of life to Isabel Trevor. She had

passed through the great winnowing machine of trouble, and had seen a father, whom she dearly loved, die, with anxiety and poverty to embitter his last hours. It was a sad and common story, which had ended one summer morning at the country parsonage where Hilda had been born. Mr. Marston, her father, was a well-meaning, kind-hearted man, easily betrayed into extravagances, to escape from the consequences of which he had (without any knowledge of business) embarked in speculations. He died a ruined man, heart-broken at the prospect of leaving his portionless children to the mercies of a cruel world.

His wife (who was dead) had been a cousin of Mrs. Trevor's, of Sanda Hall—a poor relation, in fact; and on his death-bed he wrote and implored Mr. Trevor to do something for his penniless children. Death is always terrible, but, oh! reader, does it not add to its terrors when there is not money enough in the house even to bury the dead? This was the case at Welldean Parsonage on



the July morning when Mr. Marston died. Hilda's eldest sister Marian was forced to beg Mr. Trevor to advance them a small sum for their present necessities, and Mr. Trevor was not hard-hearted enough to refuse her request.

He was touched, indeed, when he went to the funeral of his distant relative, to see the piteous grief of the second daughter, Hilda, for her dear father. The poor girl's white face, and overwhelming outbreak of sorrow, when he tried to say a few words of comfort to her, moved him to compassion, and induced him to offer Hilda a temporary home at least at Sanda Hall. The eldest daughter, Marian, was several years older, and better able to face the inevitable struggle for subsistence before them. Mr. Trevor, therefore, after much mental hesitation, decided to offer Hilda a home for the present with his daughter; and he also, with yet more mental hesitation, determined to undertake the expense of educating Ned Marston, the poor dead vicar's youngest child.

The family, which consisted of four, was finally disposed of thus : Marian, the eldest daughter, procured a situation as governess to the six children of a neighbouring clergyman ; Paul, the eldest son, went into the merchant navy as midshipman ; Hilda to Sanda Hall, as companion to Isabel Trevor ; and Ned, the youngest, as pupil of the Rev. Matthew Irvine.

This had all happened only two years ago, so that death seemed still very sad and solemn to Hilda Marston. She had not laid her mourning aside yet for her poor father, nor had the painful memories of his deathbed faded from her heart. But she seldom spoke of such things at Sanda Hall. Isabel Trevor would have considered them "a bore," and the squire loved not to be reminded of our mortal tenure. But her naturally tender and sympathetic nature had grown more tender and sympathetic during these hours of trial. She understood, therefore, what Sir George Hamilton must feel, when, one after the other, the dead faces of his late companions

reappeared upon the earth. He was called upon also to identify them as the one survivor of the crew of the lost Endymion. All this seemed exquisitely painful to Sir George. At the inquest held on the bodies of the poor sailors he was forced to enter into the details of the wreck. The twelve jurymen who sat to listen to his account had not often the satisfaction of questioning a real baronet, and they therefore did it to the best of their ability. The proud and reserved Sir George was required to tell the history of his cruise, the number and names of his crew, how the storm came on, and to answer questions which he considered utterly irrelevant to the inquiry. His replies were brief, cold, and to the point; but he said when it was over that he would not care to encounter it again.

“If any more of these unfortunate men should be cast up,” he told his host, as they returned together to Sanda Hall after the inquest, “the painful scene that I have just passed through would have to be gone over again, if I remain here (as you so kindly wish

me to do) any longer. No, I will leave Sanda to-day."

"But," replied Mr. Trevor, "only to return, I hope, when these painful recollections have faded from your mind?"

"That can never be," answered Sir George, in a low tone.

"Time is a great physician," said Mr. Trevor, in a tone as if he considered he was uttering some new and very sagacious sentiment.

"True," said Sir George, briefly, and then he changed the conversation, adroitly complimenting the squire on the architecture of a cottage which they were then passing, and which Mr. Trevor (so the politic architect allowed him to think) had assisted in designing.

"Yes," went on Mr. Trevor, gratified, "it gives me no small pleasure to think, Sir George, that this visit, which for you began so unpropitiously, has not ended so. Mr. Hannaway also admires the peculiar construction of this cottage, and I promised to

send him the plan, as he says that you propose to build some labourers' cottages at Massam. When I visit you there, I shall be proud to see my humble ideas carried out on a more extensive scale than it would be judicious of me to attempt here."

Sir George assented carelessly. He was not thinking of the Squire of Sanda and his model cottage. He was thinking what a madman he was himself. What! had he allowed Isabel Trevor's beautiful face to bewitch him already, he thought—he who had no right to seek her love? The squire went on talking complacently, and the baronet walked on gloomy and taciturn by his side. Then, just as they reached the gates of the Hall, Isabel, well mounted, and followed by her groom, rode up to them.

"Is it over?" she said almost in a whisper to Sir George, as he assisted her to dismount at the Hall door. "I have felt for you so much," she went on, in the same soft undertone, "that I could not bear to stay indoors."

How could he tell that she was lying to

him? She had a skin so soft and fair that the colour came and went in it with every passing emotion of her heart. She was wishing him to believe in her at that moment, and so her bloom deepened, and her scarlet lips parted, as the false words lingered upon them.

"I thank you," said Sir George, in a low earnest voice.

"You must tell me all about it!" continued Isabel. And she looked up into Sir George's face with her changeful, brilliant eyes.

"No, no," he answered, and his head fell. "I must go away; better for us both that I should go away."

These were the first words that Sir George had ever uttered to Isabel which had not been spoken in the ordinary language of society, and her glittering eyes glittered more brightly as she caught his tones.

"No," she said, after a moment's thought, "let me try to make you forget the past."

Sir George absolutely started, and his pale

face flushed deeply, as those few words reached his ears. Then he spoke—

“It is a gloomy past,” he said, “and I must learn to bear its memory as best I can—alone.”

Had he offered to confide in her Isabel would probably have cared very little about his confidence. As it was, her interest in his past life grew intense. But they were entering the hall door at the time that he said these words, and as a servant or two were loitering near, Isabel was compelled for the present to abandon the subject. Then the luncheon bell rang, and before that meal was over, Sir George rose, with an apology, and asked leave of Isabel to go at once and pay his promised visit to Mr. Hayward.

“I must leave Sanda in time to catch the five train for the south,” he said, “and it would ill become me to do so without seeing the brave young man who saved my life. Therefore, I must beg you to excuse me, Miss Trevor.”

Isabel coloured, but it was with vexation.

She had intended to make a conquest of Sir George, and she had always hitherto succeeded when she had intended to make a conquest. But before she could recover from her surprise, Sir George had left the room, and then Isabel looked quickly and inquiringly at her father.

"This is a sudden resolution of Sir George's, papa?" she said.

"He was much affected when viewing the bodies of the unfortunate sailors," replied the Squire. "He told me in returning that he could not bear to do so again; and as in all probability more of these poor men will be cast up, he has determined to leave Sanda at once. But from what I gathered," added the Squire, considerably, "he will certainly at some future period return."

"Oh!" said Isabel; and then she finished her lunch, whilst Sir George proceeded direct to the Parsonage.

When he arrived there, he was ushered into Mrs. Irvine's drawing-room. This was



one of those rooms in which the shabbiness of the furniture is attempted to be shrouded by antimacassars. Amelia Shadwell had apparently spent her time from her earliest infancy in manufacturing these doubtful adornments, for they were of many descriptions, and of divers kinds. Mats, also, of brilliantly-tinted wools, whose borderings were of raised flowers of unnatural dimensions, were placed in every possible spot that was capable of supporting them. Then the walls, on which a mildewed brown and grey paper hung, were adorned with photographs and faint water-coloured drawings, also framed by the industrious Amelia, in straw frames and stamped leather frames, and various other ingenious devices. The photographs chiefly consisted of the late numerous little Irvines, and were of the gloomy and blotchy description usually produced by travelling photographers. Altogether it was a dismal room, and lacked the essential quality of comfort, which can so easily be given by a tasteful woman's hand.

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Presently the door opened, and Amelia Irvine's stiff plump form and rosy commonplace face appeared.

"Oh! Sir George Hamilton," she said, in much confusion, "Ma's so sorry, but she's not well. She's bilious," went on the loquacious Amelia, "yellow, almost saffron in colour, and she can't come down, and pa's out. He's just gone out, and may be back in a minute; and ma told me to ask you to sit and wait, or, if you are in a hurry, to send a message up to her by me."

"I came to see Mr. Hayward," answered Sir George to this prolonged address. "Perhaps you will ask your mother if I can see him?"

"Well, I don't know, I'm sure," answered Amelia, blushing at the mention of the tutor's name. "You see he's to be kept quiet. He's had his arm dressed this morning with a new kind of bandage, and he seems fidgety. I offered to read the lessons to him, and the Psalms, or even a light book, but he said his head ached too badly to listen. But he takes

his beef-tea. As I always say to ma, that's a comfort. Beef-tea's so nourishing that he can't go down as long as he takes it."

"Well, kindly ask your mother if I can see him," said Sir George.

But at this minute, while Amelia still hesitated, anxious to prolong her conversation with a baronet, the Rev. Matthew entered the room and held out his hand cordially to Sir George.

"They told me that you were here, Sir George," he said. "Allow me to congratulate you on your happy recovery."

"Thanks," replied Sir George. "I am leaving Sanda to-day, Mr. Irvine, and I wish before I go to have a short interview with Mr. Hayward."

"No doubt, no doubt," said the genial parson. "Run, my dear" (this was to Amelia), "and tell your mother that Sir George wishes to see Hayward."

"Yes, pa," answered Amelia, and she hastily left the room, running as fast as her substantial feet could carry her, to the tutor's.

"Hayward," she said, in her hurry, addressing him by his surname as her mother always did, "Sir George Hamilton's come! Such a grand man. So handsome! Let me put the pillows straight, and pop an antimacassar or two on the chairs, to make the room look decent, before he comes in."

"Is he coming up to see me?" asked Hayward, and his pale face flushed.

"He's come on purpose to see you," answered Amelia, hurriedly opening a drawer and producing several clean antimacassars. "There! they'll make the room look better. Good gracious!" she cried the next minute, "here they are!" And in her haste, her antimacassars fell on the floor, just as Sir George and her father entered the tutor's room.

"I came to tell him, pa," she said, now absolutely scarlet at being found in the tutor's room; "Ma's so bilious she can't lift her head from the pillows, so I was forced to come."

"No excuse is needed, my dear," said the Rev. Matthew, good-naturedly. "Sir George

will understand that in a small household like ours we cannot stand on much ceremony."

Somewhat comforted on the score of propriety, Amelia, after glancing at Sir George and seeing that his eyes were fixed on Hayward's face, now tried to kick the fallen antimacassars under the bed.

"We will leave you together," went on the Rev. Matthew, addressing Sir George, and then glancing with a kindly smile at Hayward, "I need not introduce you, I suppose," he continued in his semi-pathetic tones, "the sea did that for ye." And then, with another kindly look at Hayward, he beckoned to his daughter, and together they left the room.

The two men that they left were both embarrassed. When last they had exchanged words, they had been face to face with death, and each thought for an instant of that solemn moment now. Then, though not quite in the cold and haughty tones that were habitual to him, Sir George spoke, holding out his hand as he did so.

"I have come to thank you," he said, "to thank you for my life."

"I—I—am very glad," faltered the tutor, "that I was able——" And then he paused.

"I have incurred a debt to you," went on Sir George, recovering his composure, "that I can never repay. But in some sort you must allow me to try to show my gratitude to you. You received my message by Mr. Hannaway, did you not?"

"Yes," answered the tutor.

"Have you decided on any profession yet, then?" continued Sir George. "But how can I ask—how can I suppose that you, lying here sick and ill, can have come to any real decision? We will leave, therefore, the question of your profession to a future time, and for the present we will only arrange something that I hope will be of benefit to you. I leave Sanda to-day, but before I do so, let us fix when you will come and pay a long visit to me."

"You are very good," hesitated the tutor, "but I am still so weak——"

"The very reason you require change. Massam (my place in Yorkshire) is only a short journey from here after all, and when you are there I promise you that you shall be regarded as a complete invalid, and allowed to get well at leisure. I can even promise you beef tea," added Sir George, with a smile, "though you may not have Miss Irvine—is that the young lady's name?—to administer it."

Hayward smiled, too, at this, and looked into Sir George's face with his thoughtful, clever eyes. He liked that face—the handsome, proud, sad face of the man whose life he had risked his own to save.

"You are very kind to me," he said, and he held out his hand to Sir George.

"It is settled, then," said Sir George, returning the tutor's grasp. "You saved my life at the risk of your own, and in return you are coming to stay with me until you get well. Not quite an equal bargain, is it, eh?" he added, with another smile.

But it was not a bright smile. There was

an indescribable shadow nearly always on Sir George's face. "He is not happy," thought the tutor, and this feeling somehow drew his heart nearer to Sir George.

After this they fixed it all. As soon as Hayward could travel with safety, he was to go to Sir George's place in Yorkshire, and there they agreed to settle the plans for Hayward's future life. They separated without any professions; but each felt that they liked the other, and that the acquaintance they had formed was likely to be lifelong.

"I shall ask Miss Irvine for the receipt of the beef tea," said Sir George, smiling and looking back at Hayward, as he left the room. And with that little joke they parted. But Sir George had a few words to say to the Rev. Matthew before he quitted the parsonage, and he said them very briefly.

"Mr. Irvine," he began, as he met the parson in the hall, just after he descended the stairs, "can I speak to you for a moment?"

Then, when the Rev. Matthew led him into his study, he went on—



"I have a cheque here," he said, "that I drew this morning to leave with you for your poor. Don't offer me any thanks," he continued, as the Rev. Matthew naturally began a complimentary oration. "I wish to give something, and, besides, I owe you so much for your kindness to Mr. Hayward."

"The dear boy is as a son to me," said the Rev. Matthew.

"But sons all cost money," said Sir George, smiling his ordinary cold smile, which had warmed somehow in Hayward's presence. "Pray accept my cheque, Mr. Irvine, and do with it what you like." And then, after a few more courteous words, Sir George left the parsonage, and when the Rev. Matthew opened the cheque, he found it was for three hundred pounds.

"It is a thank-offering for his life," thought the parson. "Well, now at least" (and his semi-comic look stole over his face), "there'll be many a poor soul in the village glad that he was saved."

Sir George walked hastily back to the

Hall, after he had quitted the parsonage. He had, indeed, barely time (with the long drive that he had in prospect before he could reach the nearest railway station) to catch the train south that he intended to travel by, and he was determined, if possible, to do so.

But as he went quickly up the staircase to his own room, after he reached the Hall, he suddenly encountered Isabel Trevor. She had been watching for him, and still wore her riding habit, and as she stood on the dark oaken staircase, one step above him, never had she appeared so strikingly beautiful to Sir George.

"Well," she said, "and you are really going to-day?"

"Yes, I am really going," he answered. "For a stranger like myself, I think I have intruded long enough on your hospitality."

"A stranger!" repeated Isabel. "You are not a stranger. You can never be a stranger any more."

"Shall I not?" said Sir George, fixing his

eyes on her face. "What shall I be, then ? Will you not quite forget me ?"

"I will never forget you," answered Isabel, "*never !*" And as the last words fell from her lips, she passed him, and Sir George, after hesitating a moment, ascended the staircase to his own room.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SIR GEORGE AT HOME.

A FEW minutes after his meeting with Isabel on the staircase, Sir George was ready to leave Sanda. But he quitted his own room for that purpose with a new nervousness, almost fear, in his heart, at the prospect of once more seeing her. When, however, he appeared downstairs he found no trace of her presence. The carriage that he had requested to be ready awaited him at the hall door, and the squire and Hilda Marston awaited him in the hall, but no Isabel was visible.

“Where is Miss Trevor? I must say good-bye to her,” said Sir George, after exchanging courteous words of parting with his host and Hilda.

"Isabel has mistaken the time of your leaving, I think," said Mr. Trevor. "To my great surprise, I am told she has just ridden out. I am certain she would not have done so, if she had known you were going."

"She told me that she had already said good-bye to you," said Hilda Marston, looking at Sir George.

"She did say—one word," answered Sir George, and he made no further inquiries, and a few minutes later was driven from the Hall.

It was years since he had been at the home to which he was now going. Years since he had seen the noble mansion, standing amid its wide and magnificently-wooded park, which had been inherited by his father with such pride and joy. How this was is easily told. Massam Park, the ancestral home of the Hamiltons, had for centuries been in the possession of the elder branch of the family, of which Sir George Hamilton's father was a cadet. But a singular fatality had pursued the original possessors, and one after another, in the prime of life, the Hamiltons of Massam

had died. Sir George's father was an officer serving with his regiment in India when the news reached him that his young cousin Sir Wilton Hamilton had been killed on the hunting-field, and that by this accident he had become the inheritor of the family estates.

With ill-concealed joy Captain Hamilton at once returned to England. He was a married man, with one son, and this son naturally became the object of much pride and ambition. But with the proverbial ill-luck of the family, the new baronet did not long enjoy his honours. When Sir George was still a youth, his father succumbed to a sudden attack of illness, and the young Sir George became immediately surrounded by every species of flattery and temptation.

Through these early days, however, he passed without coming to any serious mischance. He had a good mother, and as long as he remained in England, she exercised a good influence over him. But when he was about twenty-nine, he became weary of the easy and luxurious routine of his life, and went

abroad, travelling over various countries, refusing, to his mother's consternation and surprise, to return home, after what she justly considered to have been a lengthened sojourn in foreign lands. In vain the anxious mother fretted and finally despaired. Lady Hamilton died before her son's return to England, had died one year before we find him, after many years' absence, returning to his home.

But in the meantime Massam had not been neglected, Lady Hamilton had been a careful custodian of her son's possessions ; and Mr. Hannaway, Sir George's lawyer, and the agent of the property, had done his duty honourably and well. Massam Park had been kept up precisely as if its owner had lived beneath its roof until the last year, when, after Lady Hamilton's death a few of the servants had been discharged. But it was a splendid place, and a sort of pride of being its possessor crept into Sir George's heart when he once more found himself driving through the beautiful sweep of woodland scenery which led to his stately home.

For a moment let us follow him there, follow him to the library, which was a handsome room, containing a valuable collection of English and foreign literature. Beyond the library was a small reading-room, to which you passed through an arch, the fluted columns of which were of white marble.

To this room Sir George (after exchanging somewhat distant greetings with the servants assembled in the hall to receive him) went straight after his return to Massam. It had been his favourite room before he had left England, and it had also been the favourite room of his mother, who was a woman of refined and cultivated tastes, and who had loved its placid stillness, spending much of her time here during the latter days of her widowed and lonely life.

Her portrait hung upon its walls. A lady with a somewhat sorrowful face, and gentle eyes, that had a look of patient waiting in them that was inexpressibly touching—inexpressibly touching to her son at least, who



knew that he had kept her waiting for his return so long !

With a bitter sigh Sir George turned away after gazing on his mother's sad and placid features. He sat down in a chair where she had often sat, and covered his face with his hands, and groaned aloud.

"Oh, my God, why did I ever leave her ?" he muttered. "Or why—why have I returned with a past like mine ?"

What galling reflections were in his heart ! What was the use to him, he thought, of all the luxuries by which he was surrounded, of all the so-called pleasures that he could command ? He could never enjoy them. There was a shadow on his life, a shadow that, do what he might, go where he could, would always pursue him.

From such bitter memories he was roused by hearing a rap at the library door beyond, and presently the good-looking, smiling face of his lawyer, Mr. Hannaway, appeared between the fluted columns of the arch which led to the reading-room.

"Welcome home, Sir George!" said Mr. Hannaway, holding out his hand to his employer with much cordiality. But Sir George made no attempt to respond in suitable terms. He put his cold hand into his lawyer's, and that was all; and Mr. Hannaway's smiling expression changed at once to one of sympathy.

"You feel coming back?" he said. "It is only natural—where poor Lady Hamilton, too——" And the lawyer paused.

"Is that like her?" asked Sir George, pointing to the portrait on the wall.

"Very like her," replied Mr. Hannaway, going up to it, and examining Lady Hamilton's portrait critically. "She got that expression of late years. She told me that you had requested her to be taken and to have the portrait hung here. She said, poor lady—she was very ill then—'I shall not be waiting for him when he comes home, but the picture will;' and so she sat to Millais."

Every word of this speech, uttered in the lawyer's pleasant, easy tones, brought fresh

pain to Sir George. Mr. Hannaway was not a sensitive man, and he therefore often unconsciously hurt the feelings of those whom he never thought of wounding. He was affable, constitutionally healthy, and good tempered, and he enjoyed life and all the good things that had hitherto come in his way. His father had been a solicitor, with a large practice, and Mr. Hannaway had succeeded to the practice and many other lucrative appointments besides. One of these was the management of the estates of Sir George Hamilton, and he had fulfilled his duty well, as indeed he apparently fulfilled all the duties of his life. He was on semi-confidential terms with Sir George ; but Sir George was not a confiding man, and the lawyer knew little of his life that he had not been compelled by business arrangements to learn. But he knew more than most people, and Sir George had always found him a discreet and reliable man.

“At least,” went on Mr. Hannaway, with easy complacency, as Sir George wandered

with restless steps up and down the library and reading-room, "I trust you will be satisfied, when you have time to look over it, with the condition of the property?"

"I have no fear about that," replied Sir George.

"And I trust now," continued Mr. Hannaway, "that you will think of settling amongst us? Is the lady—pardon me asking this question—in England?"

"No, no," answered Sir George hastily, "no."

"Then have you broken it off?"

"Do not speak of this, Hannaway!" interrupted Sir George, with sudden vehemence, "now, nor ever! I am alone in the world now," he added. "I have no one with me now!"

"Pardon me for approaching the subject, Sir George," said Mr. Hannaway, with some gentlemanly feeling, noting, as he spoke, the ill-concealed agitation of Sir George. The next moment he changed the conversation, and a few minutes later dinner was announced, to which Sir George invited the lawyer to remain.

They dined in the small dining-room, where (as, indeed, all over the house) were the evidences of great wealth. Massam Park was a show place, with a state dining-room, and a large drawing-room, and ante-rooms, in which were magnificent specimens of china, of Sèvres and Dresden, and great vases of Indian filigree work, and cabinets, in which were collections of gems and precious stones.

The master of all this wealth sat opposite his lawyer with the cloud still on his brow. He talked, however, as other men talk, drinking freely of the rare wines that had lain so long untouched in his well-stocked cellars. Mr. Hannaway also was a free liver, and could discourse learnedly about the different vintages, of which he professed to be a judge. Then, as the good wine crept through his veins, he became more careless of his words.

"Talking of women," he said, "where will you find such a woman as Miss Trevor? A splendid creature! A lovely woman, I call her."

"She is very handsome," said Sir George, coldly.

He also had been drinking freely, but no flush had come on his face, nor warmth to his heart. He had a strong head, and he drank glass after glass, but still the haunting memory of the past never left him. Yet he felt displeased at his lawyer's tones when he spoke of Isabel Trevor, and if Mr. Hannaway had not been in such a jovial mood, he would easily have perceived it. As it was, he never noted the change on the dark gloomy face opposite to him, and went on speaking rapturously of Isabel's charms.

"I do not know how you did not fall a victim, Sir George," laughed Mr. Hannaway. "Being shut up in that dull old hall for ten days or so would, I think, have finished most men. Yes, yes; I consider Miss Trevor dangerously attractive."

"Do you?" said Sir George, and he rose from the table. "Will you take any more wine, Hannaway?" he went on. "If so, pray help yourself." But the lawyer took the

hint and shortly afterwards left Massam, parting with his host in his usual pleasant and unruffled manner.

When he was gone, Sir George retired at once to his bedroom, and, opening one of the windows, looked out upon the park. A half-moon was shining overhead, obscured occasionally by drifting clouds, but a gleam fell, as he stood there, on his pale face and gloomy eyes. He was thinking of his youth, of the easy, careless days, scarcely noted then, that he had spent in his old home. Everything around him seemed to recall them. There were his cricket bats, his hunting-whips—a hundred little memories, in fact, of the hours that never would return. To most men, perhaps, after a long absence from home, seeing these things again might have caused some sadness, but to few the overpowering emotion that seemed to overwhelm Sir George. He looked at them one after the other, and then, as he had done when he first saw his mother's picture, he covered his face with his hand and groaned aloud.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE TUTOR.

Two days after Sir George left Sanda Hall, to the great surprise of Hilda Marston, Isabel Trevor proposed to her to pay a visit to the parsonage.

“We shall ask for ‘Spectre,’ of course,” said Isabel, alluding to poor Mrs. Irvine, but the person I really wish to see is—don’t be shocked, pray—is Mr. Philip Hayward. I have been thinking how horribly I have treated him ; first, by sending him into the sea to fish out that gloomy Sir George ; secondly, by never having taken any notice of him since. But I mean to begin to-day. To commence with, I will take him a bouquet.”

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“ O Miss Trevor ! ” said Hilda.

“ Why ‘ O Miss Trevor ! ’ pray ? ” asked Isabel. “ If a poor man were to risk his life to please you, would you not have the grace to thank him ? ”

“ Yes—but——”

“ My good creature, spare me, both your ‘ O ’ and your ‘ buts. ’ I am going, so kindly put on your hat to accompany me.”

Of course there was nothing for Hilda but to obey after this command, and indeed she herself was not unwilling to see Philip Hayward again. She, in fact, liked and admired him, and she was only unwilling that Isabel should go to the parsonage, because with womanly penetration she had guessed his secret. She guessed, too, what Isabel had thought of Sir George Hamilton. But Sir George was not there ; and if it pleased Miss Trevor to amuse herself with the tutor, the companion perforce must accompany her.

They reached the parsonage about four o'clock, and their appearance there was evidently both unexpected and trying. The

rosy-faced girl who opened the door for them left them standing in the hall until she ran up stairs "to see if the mistress was in." This explanation being given with much confusion and hesitation of speech.

The truth was, that in the drawing-room (the one reception room of the family) the tutor had this day, for the first time since his accident, been conducted, and was at the moment of their arrival lying on a couch asleep, fairly enveloped in antimacassars, by the careful hands of Amelia Shadwell.

"What was to be done then?" thought the maid. "*What* was to be done?" thought Mrs. Irvine, when she was informed that the ladies from the Hall were waiting downstairs.

"I will tell them the truth, Susan, and they will go away," at last decided Mrs. Irvine; and so, after throwing a white knitted shawl over her shoulders, she descended the staircase, receiving the young ladies without apparent embarrassment, for she was a lady who frequently declared that

she never would be "put upon by anyone;" and as the wife of the incumbent of Sanda, thought herself fit society for any of his parishioners.

"Well, ladies," she said, extending her gaunt hand, first to Isabel, and then to Hilda, "how are you? I'm sorry Susan didn't show you upstairs at once, but I may as well tell you how it is. My young man (I call Hayward my young man, just by way of a joke, you know) has got into the drawing-room for the first time to-day, and he's lying on the sofa, asleep, I believe, Amelia Shadwell said."

"Do ask Miss Amelia Shadwell to awaken him, then," answered Isabel, with cool assurance of manner, for she regarded the Irvines with the most thorough contempt, "I particularly wish to see Mr. Hayward. I have brought this bouquet on purpose for him."

"Oh, if you wish to see Hayward, of course——" hesitated Mrs. Irvine.

"I do, indeed," said Isabel, "and so I am

sure does Miss Marston," and she turned to Hilda with a smile. "We will take a turn round your garden, Mrs. Irvine," she went on, "until you have prepared your invalid to see us. Tell him from me that I have brought him some flowers."

Hayward was really asleep when Mrs. Irvine went upstairs to convey this message to him. He was dreaming, poor fellow, until he was aroused by a sharp tap on his shoulder, and starting up, beheld Mrs. Irvine's grim figure.

"Hayward!" she said, in her sepulchral tones, "wake up. Miss Trevor's come to see you, and brought you a great bouquet."

"What!" exclaimed Hayward, and forgetting his broken arm, he sprang to his feet, his pale face flushing in a moment a sudden crimson.

"Don't excite yourself, Hayward," said Mrs. Irvine, reproachfully. "Remember your bandages, Hayward, remember your pride, Hayward, and don't let her see that you think anything of her visit."

"Where is she!" gasped Hayward, turning pale as suddenly as he had turned red.

"Taking a turn round the garden," answered Mrs. Irvine, coolly picking up some of the antimacassars that had fallen off Hayward when he started up. "There! let me put you tidy a bit—now sit straight and hold up your head like a man."

Mrs. Irvine always addressed the tutor in this maternal strain. Whether he had replaced any of the defunct little Matthew or Tommy Shadwells in her heart I know not, but she always treated him as if he were a little boy. But she was very kind to him, and there was nothing that it had been in her power to do for him since his illness that she had not done. She felt a little jealous, therefore, of Miss Trevor coming to see him now, when she had never "once looked near even to inquire before," she confided afterwards to Amelia Shadwell.

This young lady felt jealous also, and it must be admitted with considerable reason. She remembered all the beef-tea that she had

made and the dresses that she had singed during the operation. She was making beef-tea in fact when her mother came into the kitchen where she was and informed her that Miss Trevor had called to see Hayward.

Amelia turned pale at this unexpected news, and her heart sank. This foolish maiden had been nursing some very romantic dreams of late, and had imagined that her devotion to Hayward was sure to be rewarded. "Who has ever nursed him, as I have nursed him?" she often thought. "Who has ever cared for him as I do?" She therefore trembled when she heard that Miss Trevor had called to see Hayward. Even her feeble mind recognized the fact that her small domestic virtues would pale before Isabel Trevor's great attractions; and such was her emotion at the idea that in her distraction of mind she upset the pan of beef-tea!

"Amelia Shadwell, what are you doing?" asked her mother in hollow tones from the other side of the kitchen, when this accident

occurred ; upon which the unhappy Amelia immediately burst into tears.

“ What is there to cry about ? ” said Mrs. Irvine, advancing towards her daughter, as the fumes of the spilt fluid spread through the house. But Amelia went on crying in spite of her mother’s remonstrances, but it was not only for the upsetting of the beef-tea.

In the meantime Isabel Trevor was making herself charming to Philip Hayward upstairs. Mrs. Irvine, before she had descended to the kitchen to tell Amelia of the arrival of the ladies from the hall, had grimly ushered them into the drawing-room, remarking as she did so to the tutor—

“ Now, Hayward, don’t talk too much. Remember what the doctor said about keeping quiet, and I hope these ladies will remember it too. Excuse my giving you a hint, Miss Trevor, but his head’s only weak still, and I can’t have him thrown back.”

Isabel took not the slightest notice of this speech. She was advancing towards the

tutor when it was made with outstretched hand, who had risen at her entrance, and stood leaning against the couch, pale and trembling.

"How are you?" she asked in her softest tones. "Are you better?"

"Yes—yes," stammered Hayward, "it is very good of you—to come."

He never saw Miss Marston, who was also advancing towards him with outstretched hand. Only Isabel—only the beautiful face which had bewitched him, which had stolen his better sense away.

"Good," repeated Isabel. "How good? I came to see you the moment I could hope to see you. Of course, you know that I have sent every day to inquire?"

O, Isabel, Isabel! A message certainly had come from the Hall daily, but not through her. Nay, she had forgotten often to inquire, or had never heard the answer to the inquiries, which Hilda Marston had never neglected to send.

"I can only repeat," said Hayward,  
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regaining some composure, "that you are very good."

"I owe you something, do I not?" asked Isabel, fixing her lovely, changeful eyes on Hayward's face. "You did for me what no other man ever did—what no other man will ever do."

"You——mean?" asked Hayward falteringly.

"You risked your life," went on Isabel, "at my light word. I little dreamt that you would go. I little dreamt what I would feel, when I saw you plunge into the sea that day."

As Isabel said this, a wild feeling of joy rushed into the tutor's heart.

"I—I—would do it again to-morrow," he said, his voice broken with strong emotion, "to hear you say these words."

"Hush, I will not hear such nonsense!" exclaimed Isabel, with horror, putting up her hands. "I admire bravery, I honour bravery, but I trust I shall never have to endure again what you made me endure during that awful storm."

“And you went down on the rocks?” said Hayward, his deep feelings colouring his pale face, and lighting up his hazel eyes. “You risked as much as I did—you who had so much——”

Again the tutor’s voice broke and faltered, and Isabel perfectly understood what feelings were struggling in his heart. “You had so much—love, beauty, wealth. I had nothing. Oh! God bless and keep you for your gentle thought of me.”

This was what the tutor was feeling. But as the cat sometimes seems to take momentary compassion on the mouse, Isabel now took compassion on *her* victim.

“Come,” she said, “we must not talk of these things any more. They excite you too much. I must not forget Mrs. Irvine’s hint,” and Isabel laughed sweetly.

Hayward, too, smiled at this.

“She is very good, and very kind,” he said, “and you must excuse——”

“Pray don’t make any apologies,” interrupted Isabel, still laughing. “I consider

the 'Spectre' quite an institution, for she everlastingly reminds us of our latter end."

"She is odd-looking," answered Hayward, "but really kind. As for Mr. Irvine, I cannot speak in high enough terms of so excellent a man."

"He is very good, I daresay," said Isabel. "*There* is an admirer of his," she continued, carelessly pointing to Hilda Marston, whose presence during the foregoing conversation had been quite forgotten, and who was now occupying herself by looking out of the window.

As Isabel said this about her being an admirer of Mr. Irvine's, Hilda turned round, and when the tutor saw her face, he blushed deeply, and became greatly confused.

"Pardon me, Miss Marston," he said, "I—— I—— did not see you before. I think the blow on my head affects my sight. I think——"

"It is no matter," answered Hilda, gently, but she felt deeply hurt. The best woman is not an angel, and if she were I don't

suppose we faulty mortals would like her ; and the best woman, therefore (to go back to Hilda) has her vanity. To be overlooked is never pleasant. Hilda felt that she had been overlooked, nay, entirely forgotten, by the man for whom, during the last fortnight, she had felt great anxiety ; and therefore Hilda did not like it. Her face told this as plainly as if she had said it in words, and the tutor felt greatly annoyed with himself for his neglect.

“ I hope you understand, Miss Marston,” he went on, trying to make things better, “ that I did not mean——”

“ You were so much interested in your conversation with Miss Trevor that you never saw me,” interrupted Hilda. “ Pray don’t say anything more, Mr. Hayward, as that is the truth.”

“ Of course, he was interested in his conversation with me !” said Isabel, coquettishly. “ And to return to our conversation, Mr. Hayward, have you heard anything of the gloomy and taciturn Sir George ?”

There it was at last ! This question was the motive of Isabel's visit to the tutor ; was the reason why she had gathered the flowers ; why she had taken the trouble to flatter him, though she certainly had felt some interest in the effect of the last named experiment.

" Yes," answered the tutor, " I heard from Sir George this morning. The kindest letter," he went on with animation. " I like what I have seen of Sir George immensely."

" He is gentlemanly," said Isabel, as if she were thinking. " What makes him so gloomy, I wonder ? "

" Perhaps it is natural to him," said Hayward. " And, besides, you saw him under melancholy circumstances—the one survivor of a wreck."

" For which happy position he is indebted to you."

" He seems most anxious to repay that debt, then, if it is one," said Hayward. " Nothing can exceed his kindness to me. I go to Massam as soon as I am able to travel."

" Ah ! " said Isabel, inquiringly.

"Yes—for a long visit, Sir George says, but I do not know about that. I—I cannot rest long an idle man, Miss Trevor."

His eyes kindled again as he spoke; kindled with a young man's animation and hope.

"No!" said Isabel, and she looked at him. "I heard that Sir George had offered to advance you in any profession that you may choose," she continued. "Have you decided on which it shall be?"

"No," answered Hayward. "I wish to see Sir George first—of course there are many things to arrange."

"Of course. And you go to Massam probably next week?" went on Isabel, meditatively. "How strange! Do you know that I am likely to see you there then? I have some friends—school friends, they call Featherstone—who live in a place called Featherstone, and Featherstone is only a few miles off Sir George's place, Massam, and these girls have asked me to stay with them."

"Yes!" said the tutor, and his breath came short.

"Sir George invited us to Massam, also," continued Isabel, "and I think I shall go for a few days on my way to the Featherstone's. So we shall probably meet soon again, Mr. Hayward."

"I earnestly hope so; but before I leave here, before I leave Sanda, may I give myself the pleasure of calling upon you—to say good-bye?"

Hayward's was one of those faces which at times—though not really so—look absolutely beautiful from the force of expression. He looked almost beautiful then, as he asked, in pleading, earnest tones, for leave to visit Isabel; and Isabel, who was a judge, and an admirer of beauty, acknowledged it.

"Certainly you may come," she said; "why do you ask? But all this time," she added lightly, lifting the bouquet which she had brought from the table where she had laid it, "I have forgotten to present you with my flowers. I know invalids like them," she went on smiling, and moving her form with a sort of subtle grace which was peculiar to her.

"This is a lovely rose, is it not?" And she pulled from among the rest of the flowers a crimson bud, and held it towards Hayward.

But before his lips could utter his brief though heartfelt words of gratitude for this act of grace, a portentous rap was heard at the door, and the next moment the grim head of Mrs. Irvine appeared.

"Excuse my giving you another hint, ladies," she said, "but Hayward's talked enough. He's in my charge, you know, and I'm responsible, and if his head gets light—"

"No fear, Mrs. Irvine," laughed Hayward pleasantly.

"Lie down, Hayward," said Mrs. Irvine authoritatively in her hollow tones. "Wrap your head in an antimacassar, and try to sleep. Your eyes are bright, though they are not generally so, and you have a colour, though you are generally sallow, and I know what *it all means*. You are over excited, and it is as certain as possible if you don't keep yourself quiet, your head will wander."

"Well, then, lest your head should go



astray, Mr. Hayward," said Isabel, flippantly, "and give poor Mrs. Irvine the trouble of running after it, I shall say good-bye. Good-bye," and she put her hand in his for a moment, and then, after scarcely touching Mrs. Irvine's fingers, with a little smiling nod she left the room, followed by Hilda Marston, who only bowed gravely to the tutor in token of farewell.

"Mark my words, Hayward," said Mrs. Irvine, in a sepulchral voice, turning to the tutor after the door had closed behind the two ladies, "that is a light woman, and no good will ever come of her, or to her."

"Why do you say such a thing?" answered Hayward with sudden temper. "Because she is so beautiful, I suppose, that all other women are jealous of her!"

"No, young man, not from jealousy," replied Mrs. Irvine yet more grimly, "though you might have spared a woman old enough to be your mother that taunt. But I judge her by her words and looks and by the way she lets no man pass her. If my Matthew

himself had been in the room just now she would have been casting her eyes at him."

"What nonsense, what folly!" said Hayward.

"You will live to find it true," answered Mrs. Irvine, in the hollow tones of prophecy; and then, after stirring the fire, she quitted the room, leaving Hayward to his sweet and bitter reflections.

From these, in about half-an-hour, he was aroused by someone coming into the room, and, turning round, he perceived it was Miss Amelia.

"Oh! Miss Amelia," he said, good-temperedly, "be a kind creature, won't you, and bring me a vase and some water for these beautiful flowers that Miss Trevor has brought?"

These words utterly overcame Miss Amelia's already exasperated heart.

"No, Hayward, I won't!" she cried excitedly. "I won't bring you a vase, and I won't bring you any water, I won't, I won't!" And then her voice became choked with sobs.

"My dear girl," said Hayward, in great concern, "what is the matter? You must be ill, Miss Amelia. What is it, my dear girl?"

"Don't call me your dear girl," screamed the unhappy Amelia, snatching the hand away that Hayward had endeavoured consolingly to take. "Don't, I say, don't!"

"But what have I done?" asked Hayward, in utter amazement at this outbreak. "How have I offended you, Miss Amelia?"

As poor Hayward had done nothing, Miss Amelia could not make any accusations, but continued sobbing spasmodically for some time, and then suddenly cried out in a gasping voice—

"She is a bad creature! She is an upstart! Mamma says—mamma says she treated her as if she were *sweepings*! There!"

"Who do you mean?" said Hayward, beginning to laugh, and thinking the whole family had gone mad. "Do you mean Miss Trevor?"

"Yes," answered Amelia loudly, "*Miss*

*Trevor !*" And having uttered the name in tones of extreme bitterness, she threw up her head, and, with a glance of unutterable reproach at Hayward, left the room.

## CHAPTER IX.

### AT MASSAM PARK.

ISABEL TREVOR walked home after her visit to the parsonage, apparently in rather a meditative mood. She walked on in silence for some time, and then said abruptly—

“How very good-looking he is!”

“Who do you mean?” asked Hilda Marston, who was still rather in an irritable condition of mind.

“Mean!” asked Isabel, somewhat pettishly.

“Why, Mr. Hayward, of course. What a clever face he has—so thoughtful. I could imagine him a writer.”

“To be thoughtful doesn’t always seem necessary to constitute a writer now-a-days,” said Hilda, still suffering from irritation.

"No," answered Isabel, and then she relapsed into silence again.

She was weaving a little web, one of those small and often incomplete schemes which too many of her type indulge in. What she had told Hayward about knowing the Misses Featherstone was quite true, but she had almost forgotten this fact until the last few days. True, a desultory correspondence had been carried on between herself and these young ladies since their school days, but of late years this had almost entirely ceased. By accident, however, she had learnt that Featherstone lay near to Massam Park. Then she remembered her old friends, and she was now thinking of what she would write to them, speculating pretty correctly on what their answer would be.

You see Isabel Trevor knew her position. She was a beauty and an heiress, and as such always could command attention and flattery. The "Featherstone girls," as she mentally designated her old school companions, would, she knew, only be too glad to have her.

They were not heiresses, and they were not beauties. They were the daughters of a small landowner in Yorkshire, who had nearly ruined himself by horse-racing. Ill-luck sets in early with some people, and ill-luck had set in for, and always pursued Mr. Featherstone, of Featherstone. He never bought or reared a colt but some mischance befel it; he never backed a winner, and never did any good all his days.

He was a widower as well as Isabel's father, for his poor wife had sickened and died after one fatal Derby, from the effects of which Mr. Featherstone's finances never had a chance of recovering themselves. Mr. Featherstone himself was a rakish, good-looking man, who affected the horsey style, though horses had been the bane of his life. He had tried several times to retrieve his fortunes by a second marriage with a woman with money, but women with money are shy of a man whose embarrassments are notorious. Yet he always continued to keep his head above water. Mortgages upon mortgages!

The estate was mortgaged up to the hall door ; even the stone steps of the vestibule, and the foot-scraper outside, Lucinda Featherstone (the second daughter) declared were in pecuniary difficulties.

Inside, however, everything was jolly. The girls were good tempered and good-looking, and had fine figures and fine constitutions. They went to every available "meet," archery party, and dance for miles and miles around, and rode, flirted, and waltzed as if they had not a single care in the world.

"They will be delighted to have me," thought Isabel Trevor as she walked home from the Parsonage ; and she thought it justly. So as soon as she returned to the Hall she sat down to write to the Featherstones. Papa and herself, she informed them, were going into Yorkshire ; were going to visit Sir George Hamilton at Massam (then followed the details of the shipwreck, and Sir George's "romantic rescue"), and she could not think of being in their neighbourhood without



going to see her old friends. When would they be at home ? and so on.

The answer to this letter (which came by return of post) was exactly what Isabel expected. The Featherstones would be delighted to see her. They were enchanted at the prospect of meeting her, and in rather exuberant and ill-chosen terms declared their satisfaction. Isabel was to fix her own time for the visit ; was assured she would be always welcome, and they expected that she would make " quite a sensation amongst the men (married and unmarried) around them."

What style of women the Featherstones were could have been almost told from this letter. Jolly, free-spoken girls, who became intimate friends with men after half an hour's conversation, and who quarrelled and made up again with equal frequency and ease. They, however, were really pleased at the idea of Isabel Trevor visiting them, and good-looking, red-faced, rakish Antony Featherstone, Esq. (commonly called Toney), was apparently very well pleased also.

"If she's an heiress, I think I had better go in for her, my dears?" he said.

"My good old man," answered Lucinda, the second girl, affectionately patting her father's broad shoulders, "you would have no chance. Isabel Trevor is one of the vainest and handsomest girls I have ever seen. She is ambitious, too, or I'm much mistaken, and probably her motive for coming to see us is that she wishes to be longer in the neighbourhood of Sir George. See by her letters how dexterously she alludes to him." And Lucinda drew Isabel's letter from her dress pocket and put it into her father's hands with a little laugh.

Thus the girls saw through Isabel's motives, and perceived smilingly what she thought she had hidden so well.

"If she's coming after Sir George, she'll be a little out of her calculations, I fancy," said Mr. Featherstone, rather roughly.

"Oh, you mean the old story, I suppose?" replied Lucinda, lightly.

Mr. Featherstone nodded his head significantly.

"Well, I fancy she is coming after Sir George," rejoined Lucinda. "But there's one thing certain, as far as I remember of Isabel Trevor, she will never break her heart for any living man."

"Quite right," growled Mr. Featherstone, "they aren't worth it." And having given vent to this sentiment, Mr. Featherstone composed himself to sleep.

Yes, Mr. Featherstone could sleep apparently with an easy conscience, after his brandy and sodas at lunch, and after his bottle of port at dinner, though he knew that at his death his daughters would probably be left penniless. That dark day, however, he never contemplated. He was only a young man still he told himself; the girls might marry. A hundred things might occur, in fact, so why should he disturb his rest or make himself miserable? At all events he did not, and he was undoubtedly a flourishing specimen of a careless, easy, though not a badly intentioned man.

After Isabel Trevor received the gushing

letter from the Featherstones she immediately went to her papa.

"Papa," she said, "you remember the Featherstone girls? The girls I was at school with?"

"I think I do remember the name, love," replied Mr. Trevor, removing his respectable, gold-rimmed double glasses from his respectable lofty nose.

"Well, they have written to ask me to stay with them," went on Isabel, mendaciously; "and as Featherstone, their place, is near Massam Park, papa, I thought perhaps if you are going there soon, as you promised Sir George you would, that we might travel together."

"Certainly, my love," answered the squire; and then he paused. He was wondering if Isabel still thought of Sir George as at one time he had certainly imagined that she did; but he was too delicate-minded, in spite of his obscure intellect, to ask.

"I thought, you know," continued Isabel, throwing back her head, "that I might go

with you first to Massam, for a day or two—Sir George asked me, you remember.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Trevor, slowly.

“And it would be so nice for us to travel together,” said Isabel. “Will you write to him, papa, and tell him when we could go?”

“I think, my love, we ought to wait until he writes to us,” suggested Mr. Trevor.

“Oh, I don’t know. Say it would be convenient for us to go on such and such a day,” urged Isabel.

“I would prefer to wait until I hear from him,” again said the squire, rather stiffly.

Isabel looked angry, but she said nothing. She knit her brows, and bit her red lips with her white teeth, and then, after considering a minute or so, she left her father’s presence, going straight to her own room, where she at once sat down to compose a letter to Sir George Hamilton. She wrote as follows:—

“DEAR SIR GEORGE,—Some old friends of mine, the Featherstones, wish me to visit them, and as they are near neighbours of

yours, I have been trying to persuade papa this afternoon to write to you to tell you that if you will allow us we shall take Massam on our road, and look you up for a day or two. Thus I would secure for myself a travelling companion, for I dislike travelling alone so much, besides having the pleasure of seeing you again. But papa snubbed my proposal unmercifully, telling me to wait until we were asked, and making various other unpleasant comments! So you see nothing is left for me but to appeal to your generosity. Will you write and invite us? Ah, I know you will. Is it a bold thing of me to ask you? Perhaps—but I feel as if we were quite old, old friends.—Yours very truly,  
ISABEL TREVOR."

When Sir George Hamilton received this letter he was sitting alone in his library. He was sad and gloomy, and he looked so. He got up after he had read Isabel's letter, and began walking slowly up and down the room, with his brows knitted and his lips com-

pressed. Yet this letter came as a sort of relief to him. He was a man whose own thoughts were ill-company, but still he shrank from seeking other companions. Now they were forced on him he thought, for he had not forgotten the claims which Isabel and her father had on his hospitality. Did she wish to see him again? went on his reflections. This bright creature, that no man could see without worshipping. "Ah—ah—she little knows!" And Sir George gave a bitter sigh.

But there could be but one answer to such a letter as Isabel's, he thought; and this answer Sir George speedily wrote. She was to name her own day, he told her, for coming to Massam, and his poor house would only be too much honoured by her presence there. He was, perhaps, unaware himself that he framed his sentences to Isabel in softer language than he would have done to any other woman in the world. Yet it was so. He saw in his mind's eye the beautiful face of which he had so often thought since his

return to his splendid but lonely home, as he penned the words. Isabel, at least, had not been forgotten by this reserved and apparently care-burdened man.

She felt elated, almost triumphant, when she received this letter from Sir George. So she had won, she thought; for Isabel had immense faith in her own attractions, if they only had fair play. They would have fair play at Massam, she concluded, and, therefore, her heart felt full of joy.

Sir George not only wrote to her, but also to the squire. Isabel was in her bedroom shortly after she had read Sir George's letter, mentally planning irresistible costumes, when she received a message from her father that he wished to speak to her, and when she went to him she found him sitting with an air of satisfaction and a letter lying open before him.

"Isabel, my love," he said, addressing his daughter, "if you still wish to go to Massam, as you said you did a day or two ago, you have now the opportunity of doing



so. This is a letter from Sir George," and Mr. Trevor pointed to the open letter on the table, "containing a very courteously-expressed invitation for us both."

"Oh!" said Isabel, and she took up Sir George's letter.

There was no hint of the one that she had written to him. Sir George merely expressed a hope that Mr. Trevor and his daughter would now fulfil their promise, and visit him at Massam; then followed a few well-chosen words of thanks for the kindness that he had received during his stay at Sanda.

"It has come very opportunely, as you wish to visit your friends, the Featherstones," said Mr. Trevor.

"Very," said Isabel, and she gave a little laugh.

"If you will fix the time, I will write to Sir George to-day," went on Mr. Trevor. "Of course, Miss Marston will accompany you?"

"There is no of course about it, papa," answered Isabel, brusquely. "I see no reason why she should go."

"Nevertheless, there is a reason, Isabel," said Mr. Trevor. "You could not go to Sir George's without another lady."

"What folly!" said Isabel. "Besides, the Featherstone girls will be so near."

"I know nothing of the Misses Featherstone," replied the squire, "but I am competent to judge of what will be the best arrangement for my own family, and I wish Miss Marston to accompany us."

"She will only be in the way," retorted Isabel.

"I wish it," repeated Mr. Trevor, magisterially.

The Squire of Sanda, like most silly men, was obstinate. He had his own settled ideas, and he tenaciously clung to them. He was very indulgent to Isabel, and she had far more of her own way than was good for her; but if he once fixed anything in his own mind there it remained, and he had now fixed that Hilda Marston should go to Massam.

"How can you be so obstinate, papa?" said Isabel, losing temper.

"My love, firmness is not obstinacy," replied the squire.

Ah, how he respected himself at that moment! What a great man he was, he thought—so composed, and yet so firm.

"I would not allow any woman to ruffle me," he reflected.

"What a tiresome, pompous old man!" reflected Isabel.

But the squire got the best of it, for during the argument which ensued between them after these mutual reflections, Mr. Trevor informed his daughter that unless Miss Marston went to Sir George Hamilton's that he would not go. Thus, as Isabel could not visit Massam without her father's protection, she was forced, with a very bad grace, to give in.

So Hilda Marston received an intimation during the day that she was expected to accompany Isabel into Yorkshire. This young person was anything but delighted with the idea. She was beginning to tire of her rôle of companionship, and to pine for

harder and more independent work. "I am an absolute cipher here," she often thought. "Surely I could spend my life better than being so completely useless and despised as I am now."

It was silly, she knew, for she was a sensible girl, but she had taken very much to heart the fact that Philip Hayward had forgotten to notice her on the day when she and Isabel had called at the parsonage. You see she had not been used to this kind of treatment. In her father's home, poor though it was, she was *someone*. A fondly-loved daughter for one thing ; an affectionate and favourite sister for another. So it was a great change. Isabel Trevor was not actually unkind to her, but she was not kind. She cared nothing about her : in fact, cared nothing about any woman. She would have given her her old dresses, but Hilda was too proud to accept them ; but she would have given her nothing that she had the slightest value for. Hilda, sensitive and tender-hearted, felt every moment her nature rise in

antagonism with the selfish, cold-hearted one with whom she was now continually thrown. She naturally was not blinded by Isabel's beauty. She even felt sometimes that she hated that beauty—the subtle, sensuous beauty that wiled every man's heart away. She therefore often thought of leaving Sanda. But there are wheels within wheels. For poor Hilda there were her old home ties. Her sister often wrote to her to say how glad she was that she was so well settled, and then there was Ned—poor little Ned! Were she to offend the squire by proposing to leave the Hall, would the squire continue his patronage to little Ned? This meant feeding, clothing, and educating him, and who else was there to do it if Mr. Trevor turned away? All these things naturally influenced Hilda, but they did not reconcile her to her present life.

Isabel Trevor, too, had allowed her to see very plainly that she did not think it necessary that Hilda should accompany them to Massam—not in words, perhaps, but still

Isabel had made her understand, and there were other reasons also why she did not wish to go ; reasons which many a poor lady will well understand.

The squire, however, had thought about these last reasons, and did his best to remove them. In fact, he had remembered that Hilda could scarcely go to Massam without a suitable dress or two ; and he, therefore, with some ostentation placed an envelope in her hand the day after they had decided to visit Sir George Hamilton.

“Young ladies, I believe,” he said, “always find that they ‘have nothing to wear’ when they are about to pay visits, so I trust you will accept this trifle, Miss Marston ?”

The Squire of Sanda was one of those men who made speeches which would sound almost clever, or at least ordinary, from the lips of a clever man. From his they oppressed you with a sense of their vacuity. He, in fact, clothed his limited ideas in very tolerable language. But it did not impose upon you somehow. You felt the hollowness

beneath, just as you recognize ability in the simplest words.

However, he meant to be kind to Hilda, and therefore Hilda need not have blushed and looked as uncomfortable as she did when he gave her the envelope.

"You are very kind," she faltered, "but I——would rather not go to Massam."

"I wish you to go," said Mr. Trevor, in the tone in which, at the quarter sessions, he condemned small boys to be whipped for stealing turnips and men to be imprisoned for snaring hares.

"But——" hesitated Hilda.

"I wish you to go, and I wish you to appear well-dressed," reiterated the squire; and, after this, what could the poor girl say? Nothing, of course, and it may serve to illustrate Hilda's character to describe what she did with the squire's gift.

When she opened the envelope she found it contained twenty pounds—four clean, crisp, five pound notes. This seemed quite a large sum to Hilda at first, and to spend it all upon

herself was impossible to her nature. No, there was dear Marion, she thought, had long coveted a new jacket, and so five pounds found its way to her eldest sister. Then there was little Ned. He wanted a new suit sadly, Hilda decided, and thus another five pounds disappeared. She finally reserved ten pounds for herself, to buy two new dresses. Like most women, in fact, who are womanly in their ways, Hilda liked to be well dressed. She was a fine-looking, sweet-faced girl, though not a beauty, and dress, therefore, made a considerable difference in her appearance. She had the disadvantage also of living with Isabel Trevor, who was always magnificently dressed. Everything goes by comparison, and many things which would have looked well in the quiet parsonage, which had been her old home, looked shabby beside the elegant and elaborate costumes which Isabel Trevor continually wore. But Hilda had good taste and knew what became her, and so she made excellent use of her ten pounds.

The whole party left Sanda for Massam



about five days after Sir George's invitation had been received. Isabel Trevor was radiant and excited during their journey, and kept continually laughing and talking to her father and Hilda.

"I wonder if our friend, the tutor, will be there?" she said, alluding to Hayward.

"I scarcely think that Sir George would invite him to meet us," remarked the squire.

"Oh, but I assure you that Sir George has invited him," replied Isabel. "Not to meet us, of course, but to go for a long visit, and, indeed, it must be admitted that Sir George owes him every civility." And Isabel laughed.

She knew quite well when she said this, that if they remained long enough at Massam, Hayward would be there when they were. He had paid his promised visit to the Hall, and Isabel had seen him. During this visit, partly for amusement, and partly because she had begun to like the tutor's thoughtful face, she had done her best to increase her power over him. She knew quite well that he

greatly admired her. She had seen and treasured up the parting look that he had given her before he had plunged into the sea, to try at her bidding to save Sir George Hamilton's life. She liked such looks as this; looks which told of wasted hours, of restless pain; of a man's life all turned to bitterness out of vain love for her. This may read like exaggeration, but it is not so. Nothing was so dear to Isabel Trevor as her vanity, and she cared not how many hearts she sacrificed as long as she gratified this leading passion. But she was ambitious also, and this feeling stirred strongly within her as they approached Sir George's splendid home and drove through the glorious woodland scenery by which it was surrounded. It was worth winning, Isabel thought, as she looked out of the luxurious carriage that they had found waiting for them at the station nearest to Massam Park. It was just growing dusk, but she could still see as they went down the long avenue how beautiful it was. Here was everything a woman wanted, Isabel reflected,

and she determined that her visit should not be in vain.

Sir George was waiting on the broad terrace in the front of the house to receive them. The terrace was laid out with ornamental flower-beds and vases, in the Italian style, and had a fine white marble fountain in the centre. Isabel saw this almost at a glance ; and she saw also that there was a faint flush on Sir George's usually pale face, as he advanced down the steps of the terrace and held out his hand in welcome, as he approached the door of the carriage.

" Well, we have arrived, Sir George," said Mr. Trevor, as he returned the baronet's greeting ; but Isabel said nothing. She only looked into Sir George's face, who gravely handed her out of the carriage and then offered her his arm to escort her up the steps of the terrace.

Inside the house everything was alike magnificent and comfortable. Even Mr. Trevor was impressed by the lofty hall and broad staircase, both of which were adorned

with many fine paintings ; the wrought-iron balustrade of the staircase being beautifully painted and relieved with gold. Hilda Marston, who had never been in a house like this before, looked round in genuine admiration and even a little awe. But Isabel Trevor held her head high and seemed to notice nothing. She did not wish Sir George to think that she was particularly struck with the splendour of his stately home.

But no sooner were the two ladies alone after dinner than it was quite different. Then Isabel ran from one room to another, admiring and commenting on the beautiful objects they contained. She was fond of china, and went into raptures over the magnificent collection of Sèvres and Dresden, and was kneeling before a locked cabinet in the small drawing-room, which contained precious stones, trying if she could open it, when Sir George and her father rejoined them. For a moment, when Sir George saw her occupation, a frown contracted his brow, but the next he advanced towards her.

"That cabinet is always kept locked," he said, addressing her, "but I will send to the housekeeper for the key."

"I was trying to get a closer peep at your treasures," answered Isabel, not without some slight embarrassment, as she rose from her rather undignified position.

When the key of the cabinet was brought, Sir George unlocked it and took out the gems, one after another, for Isabel's inspection.

"Was your mother a collector of these things?" asked Isabel, as she handled and admired the stones.

"No," answered Sir George, "my poor mother cared little or nothing about them. This collection, which is of great value, I believe, was made by the Lady Hamilton who preceded her. My father, as perhaps you know, was not born the heir of Massam. It belonged to the elder branch of the family, who all in a most singular manner died, and thus my father became its possessor."

"A lucky fatality for him," laughed Isabel, showing her white teeth.

"It seemed so then," said Sir George, "yet perhaps had I——" And then he abruptly paused.

"Been poor?" suggested Isabel, with another laugh.

"Yes, been poor," went on Sir George, gravely, "I might have been a better man."

"Or a worse," said Isabel, lightly. "I must admit I prefer the temptations of wealth to those of poverty."

Sir George made no reply to this. He was standing looking at her fixedly. She was holding a great sparkling unset sapphire in the palm of her slender hand, and it struck Sir George for the first time at that moment that there was something in the expression of her lovely face that he would rather not have seen there.

"Isn't this splendid?" said Isabel, returning to her admiration of the gem in her hand and moving it so as to catch its glitter in the light of the chandelier.

"If you admire it so much, I will have it set for you," said Sir George.

"Will you?" answered Isabel, looking up delightedly, for she was a woman who loved gifts. "Ah, how good you are!"

Upon this Sir George gave rather a harsh little laugh.

"Where are your conservatories?" asked Isabel. "You know I love flowers—will you show me some?"

"I fear they have been neglected since my poor mother's death," said Sir George; "but, if you wish, you can see a small conservatory which the morning room opens into. The others are not lighted."

"I do wish," answered Isabel. "I like to see all over a place at once."

"Come, then," said Sir George. But as Isabel prepared to follow him he turned courteously to Hilda Marston, who was standing in another part of the room looking at some books lying on the table. "Will you go too, Miss Marston?" he asked.

Hilda gave one glance into Isabel's face, and reading there strong objections to this proposal, she answered with a smile, glancing

at Mr. Trevor, who was calmly sleeping in an easy chair, with the *Times* over his face,

“No—I will see them some other time,” she said. “Just now I will stay and keep Mr. Trevor company.” And she gave a little nod at the sleeping squire.

So Isabel followed Sir George alone, through the still corridors of the house, until they came to the left wing, in which the morning room was situated, and from which they passed into the conservatory beyond. There was nothing particularly remarkable about it, and after Isabel had walked round it, she began gathering herself a bouquet of the best flowers it contained.

“Don’t you care for flowers?” she asked, looking at Sir George with a smile.

“No; I don’t know,” he answered, absently. “I don’t know what I do care for, I think.”

Then Isabel laid down her flowers and went up to him, looking at him with her bright, beautiful eyes.

“What makes you always so sad, Sir George?” she said. “And so—indifferent?”



She almost whispered the last word, but Sir George heard it.

"I am not indifferent," he answered, quickly. "I wish I were."

"Then you are sad?" said Isabel.

Sir George turned away his head for a moment, and then he said—

"I must try not to seem so, at least, Miss Trevor, when you are here."

Isabel felt disappointed by this reply.

"Oh," she said, "pray do not assume any false gaiety on my account." And she threw back her head as if she were annoyed.

Upon this, Sir George looked at her kindly. "I don't wish you to be sad," he said; "you, who are so young and bright."

"And I don't wish you to be sad," answered Isabel, with a sudden change of mood, and in the soft, sweet tones she could so well assume. "You—who are my friend," and she put her hand half coyly into his.

As she did so, Sir George took it, holding it for a moment tightly clasped in his own. Then, suddenly (before Isabel could speak),

his expression changed, and he bit his lip and dropped her hand abruptly.

"Let us rejoin the others," he said, almost coldly, "the air is chill for you here, Miss Trevor."

"I think so, too," answered Isabel, haughtily; and angry and annoyed she returned to her father and Hilda Marston, in the small drawing-room. She felt she had failed, and failure was very bitter to Isabel's vain heart.

## CHAPTER X.

### A FIRST PROPOSAL.

THE next morning at breakfast, Sir George addressed Isabel with a smile,

“Since you have been good enough to honour Massam with your presence, Miss Trevor,” he said, “I think I should try to make it a little more amusing for you than it generally is. You know my neighbours, the Featherstones, I believe?”

“Oh, yes,” answered Isabel, rather carelessly, “the girls were at school with me.”

“Well,” went on Sir George, “I think I had better begin to send out some invitations at once. I have been so long away that I have almost forgotten everyone—but I can apply to Hannaway.”

“Don’t trouble to have people here on our account,” said Isabel. “To begin with, I hate country dinner-parties. If you would give a ball, perhaps.” But Sir George shook his head at the suggestion.

“No,” he said, “no, I could not do that.”

“Then pray don’t have any dinner parties.” went on Isabel, “for I consider them a most dreary waste of time. I know what it is to sit and listen to the interesting catalogue of domestic ailments with which the model mother regales her friends after dinner. Then there is the scandalous dowager, picking little holes with great relish in the coats of her neighbours ; and last, and not least for poor me, there are insipid girls, awkward girls, and tiresome girls, all yawning behind their fans, until the generally not over brilliant specimens of your sex once again appear upon the scene.”

“And you leave out the charming girls,” said Sir George, with a laugh. “Pray, what do they do under the circumstances ?”

“The charming girls,” answered Isabel,

boldly and brightly, "to whom, of course, I belong, don't like it at all. They detest stupid men, however large their rent-rolls are. They weary of tiresome girls, however pretty their faces are; and they hate scandalous dowagers, because they know the more charming they are, that the dowagers will tear them to pieces with greater satisfaction."

"My dear Isabel," said Mr. Trevor, who was buttering his toast, "surely you are giving Sir George a very exaggerated description?"

"I could not exaggerate the weariness with which such society as we usually meet about Sanda inspires me with," said Isabel. "Oh, the long dreary drives, and the long dreary dinners I have gone through! I envy you, Sir George, to have been out of it all so long."

"Then you did not go into much society abroad, Sir George?" asked Mr. Trevor.

"No, I kept out of it," answered Sir George, "as I mean to keep out of it here."

But," he added, "I thought, perhaps, to amuse Miss Trevor and Miss Marston."

"Leave Miss Trevor and Miss Marston to amuse themselves," said Isabel, lightly, as Sir George paused. "May I arrange the programme for to-day?"

"Certainly, most certainly," replied Sir George.

"Then I propose to spend all the morning in the grounds and in the park," went on Isabel. "The lovely peep I had this morning out of my bed-room window was quite enough to make me long for more. So if it will not weary you, Sir George——"

"It will not weary me," he answered; and he thought at that moment—who would ever weary of a woman like this?

Yet, at times, she repelled him. He remembered his mother's gentle words, even when Isabel was giving her satirical description of county society. She, the dead mother, had seldom spoken of other's failings or other's sins. Sir George was bitter and satirical himself at times, but somehow

he loved not to hear harsh words on Isabel's lovely lips. But she fascinated him. It was her beauty, and he knew it, that gave her this strange power over him ; a power that he nevertheless sometimes tried to resist.

But not that morning. Massam lay bathed in golden sunshine, sunshine which fell on the great trees, on the green glades, on the distant woods. These, rich in the tawny mellow tints of autumn, stirred and swayed in the fresh breeze, while the falling leaves stole softly downwards, to wither in the misty undergrowth below.

Through the grounds first, and then through the woods, Sir George led Isabel. He was her host, he told himself, and so it was his duty to pay her every attention in his power. But time did not lag that morning for Sir George. Into the dim distance, for a few hours at least, faded the bitter past. Isabel's cheeks were flushed, and her eyes sparkled as she met Sir George's earnest and admiring gaze. He was worth winning, she thought. This man, so cold and reserved to

others, who sought not the love of either women or men. Would she win? Ah, she was very fair, and had a winning tongue, and knew her power. Sir George, gloomy and taciturn as he was, was yet a man of deep and passionate feelings. A man who could love and hate—a man who had loved and hated only too well.

Behind them, but at a considerable distance, walked the Squire of Sanda and Hilda Marston. The squire, for him, was talkative and agreeable, and Hilda was absolutely enjoying her walk. This may seem strange, as her companion was Mr. Trevor; but our Hilda had other companions on that bright morning. These were her sweet thoughts, her good resolves, her pretty castles in the air. These imaginary castles, wherein Hilda dwelt in the future and was rich, were generally inhabited also by the other members of her family. What ponies little Ned rode in them that she had given him! What dresses Marion was clothed in, and what sums of money she slipped into Paul's not unwilling



hand! From the contemplation of these airy gifts she was, however, recalled by Mr. Trevor's slow, pompous voice.

"Certainly, Sir George is a most fortunate man," said the squire.

"Yet a more melancholy-looking man I never beheld," replied Hilda; "Sir George always appears to me as if he were struggling against some settled grief."

"He should get married," said the squire, with an affectation of ease in his voice and manner.

"Perhaps that would do him no good," answered Hilda at random, who had gone back into one of her air castles.

"I think," said Mr. Trevor, "that every man is better for being married. Home ties are the surest foundation for settled happiness."

"Yes," said Hilda, who was considering what colour Ned's first pony should be.

"Of course there are many things to be taken into consideration," continued the squire. "In contemplating so serious a

step, a man must, of course, consider his first family——”

“Yes,” said Hilda, still mentally contemplating the pony.

“But if he sees a prospect—a reasonable prospect,” went on Mr. Trevor, “of his daughter, or daughters, as the case may be, settling in life, I think that a man—a man with proper means and settled home—is justified in again contemplating marriage, with a suitable person.”

“Of course,” said Hilda, whose mind was still wandering in the air.

“I have thought a great deal lately on this subject,” continued Mr. Trevor, “and as I think that I may now reasonably expect that Isabel will marry——”

Hilda did not speak as the squire paused. She heard him say something about Isabel marrying, but as she considered this a delicate subject at present, she was discreetly silent.

“I need not—I suppose—remind you,” again continued Mr. Trevor, “that all this is in the strictest confidence. In fact, had I not

the greatest dependence on your character, I would not have approached the subject, but I have particular reasons for doing so."

"Yes?" once more said Hilda, now really listening to what the squire was saying.

"These reasons, my dear Miss Marston, I wish you to understand," went on the squire, a little nervously. "In fact—ah, well—I again contemplate marriage."

"Oh!" said Hilda, thoughtfully. "Who can it be?" she was mentally wondering. "Shall I lose my home?" was her next thought.

"I have observed with pleasure," said the squire, after clearing his throat, "that you are not one of those young women who make marriage the chief object of their lives, and endeavour to attract attention wherever they go. But though such aims appear to me to be frivolous, and even degrading, there is no doubt but that a woman is better settled in life."

"I suppose so," said Hilda, as the squire again paused.

"There is no doubt of it," reiterated the squire, magisterially. "And—now, my dear Miss Marston," he added, in a milder tone, "I hope I have made you understand?"

"I—do not quite understand," said Hilda, nervously.

"I—wish you to understand in fact—that I—well, contemplate marrying you," said Mr. Trevor, and Hilda absolutely started, and the next moment flushed deeply, as the squire declared his intentions.

"I was prepared for a little surprise," continued Mr. Trevor, affably. "The attentions that I have hitherto shown you have been confined to protecting friendship; but I have not been unobservant of your character during the time you have resided under my roof. And I have come to the conclusion," added the squire, "that, as you made an excellent daughter to your poor father, you will make an excellent wife for me."

Of what was Hilda thinking as the squire concluded his speech? My readers, will you blame her when I tell you that she was

absolutely thinking over his proposal? Has anyone, I wonder, who will read this story of Hilda's life ever been entirely penniless? Mind, this girl had not one shilling of her own. The clothes she wore belonged to the squire (at least his money had paid for them), and he had paid for little Ned's clothes and little Ned's education—and if Hilda married him all her castles in the air might come true. All—no, not all, for the imaginary beneficent giver of the air castles had always been loved by Hilda, and she did not love Mr. Trevor—and yet——

Before them, in the winding paths of the woods, two figures were just visible. These were Sir George and Isabel, who also were thinking of the future, though not in so direct a manner as the squire and Hilda. Hilda looked at them, hesitated, and blushed. If Isabel were to marry Sir George, her home at Sanda (unless she married the squire) was lost to her. And then there was little Ned——

“May I think over what you have said?”

she faltered. "Will you give me time to consider?"

"Certainly," replied the squire, graciously. "I approve of haste in nothing. This day fortnight, my dear Miss Marston, I will ask for your answer. In the meanwhile," he added, with a self-satisfied smile, "I will permit myself to hope."

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE FEATHERSTONES.

THUS the first morning that she spent at Massam Park proved a momentous one for Hilda Marston. The proposal that she had received was her first proposal, and Mr. Trevor was her first declared lover, though she had several admirers during the old days when she had lived at her father's parsonage.

It was a momentous day also for Isabel Trevor. She had not wasted her time during her long walk through the autumnal woods. Sir George came in from that walk excited, if not happy. His eyes involuntarily followed Isabel's tall figure wherever she went, and she, conscious of that surveillance, looked even more bright and beautiful than usual.

Hilda, on the contrary, was embarrassed and silent during lunch after this eventful morning. She had not made up her mind, and she felt as if she could scarcely look the squire in the face. Mr. Trevor, on the other hand, was full of complacency. All seemed to be going on rightly between Isabel and Sir George he thought, and Hilda now understood his intentions. His mind was also perfectly at ease about her answer. She was a sensible girl he believed, and she would make a sensible wife. We can imagine, therefore, the squire's satisfaction. He scarcely remembered the long years which really lay between himself and the girl he contemplated marrying. He was the Squire of Sanda, he remembered, a man of wealth and position, and he was in his own estimation an excellent match for Hilda. Indeed, he thought that he was acting in a most noble and honourable manner.

"I have chosen her neither for wealth nor even for high birth," reflected the squire during lunch, looking at the sweet, blushing, embarrassed face opposite to him. "She will, no



doubt, appreciate the generosity with which I have acted."

His complacent reflections and Isabel's lively conversation were, however, alike presently interrupted by the arrival of visitors. These consisted of the Misses Featherstone (Isabel's school-companions) and their father, Mr. Antony Featherstone, of Featherstone. When their cards were brought in, Isabel asked if they might be ushered into the small dining-room where Isabel, her father, Hilda, and their host were having lunch. To this proposal Sir George courteously agreed, and presently two fine, tall, ruddy-haired girls, made their appearance, followed by jovial, easy Antony Featherstone.

The girls hurried up to Isabel and embraced and kissed her ardently, embraces and kisses which Isabel returned both scantily and coldly. Then Mr. Featherstone was presented to Isabel, who received his bold looks of admiration graciously, and condescended to smile at the free-spoken Yorkshireman's not over-refined remarks.

"My girls have often told me about you," he said, looking at Isabel with his once handsome eyes, "but I'm accustomed to hear them exaggerate, so I didn't believe all they said."

"And what did they tell you about me, Mr. Featherstone?" asked Isabel, not without a shade of coquetry in her manner.

"What your glass tells you every time you look in it," answered this good-for-nothing Antony Featherstone, and a frown crossed Sir George's brow both when he heard the question and answer.

"Well, Sir George," went on Mr. Featherstone, turning to their host, "I hope you've come to settle among us, now that you've really got home. I did myself the honour of leaving a card at the West Lodge a day or two ago, but they said you were from home. And I must heartily congratulate you also, Sir George," continued the voluble Mr. Featherstone, "on the wonderful escape you had a short time ago. Hannaway told me the particulars of your rather unpleasant dip in the sea."

To this speech Sir George made no reply, only gravely bowing his head at its conclusion.

"But he was a lucky fellow, wasn't he, Miss Trevor?" went on the unabashed Antony, "to be fished out at *your* hall door. By Jove ! I'd run the risk—shipwreck and all—if I'd such a chance." And Mr. Featherstone laughed loudly and pulled his brown whiskers, in which a shade of grey was now just beginning to appear.

He was a fine specimen this of a reckless, good-natured, worthless man. Sometimes, indeed, he took a fit of repentance in the morning, when he had a very bad headache ; but usually he forgot lost opportunities, lost honour, and reputation alike. He was hopelessly in debt, so hopelessly that he never tried to get out of it. Instead of doing so, he spent the mornings in playing billiards and drinking brandy and soda water and his afternoons generally in doing nothing at all. When the day of reckoning comes to such men as this, they generally consider themselves unfortunate. They say, "Look how

so-and-so has got on ; how lucky he has been," or some such envying words. They forget that "so-and-so" never wasted his mornings or his afternoons. When they were playing, "so-and-so" was at work ; and thus it comes to pass that when the player drifts into dishonoured age, the worker sits down to rest in peace.

Sir George, who knew from Hannaway all about Mr. Featherstone's embarrassments, felt especially disgusted when the jovial hospitable Antony began pressing him, Mr. Trevor, and Miss Trevor, to go over and dine at Featherstone on the following Thursday.

"I never dine out, Mr. Featherstone. I go into no society," said Sir George, coldly.

"But it's a bad plan, my dear fellow," was the careless answer. "One gets into the sulks and mopes if one doesn't see a friend now and then, to cheer one up. Come, surely you will follow where such bright eyes lead you?" And Mr. Featherstone bowed low to Isabel, who laughed a light laugh at these words.

"I, of course, do not wish to interfere

with any engagement that Mr. or Miss Trevor may form," replied Sir George, yet more coldly.

"Oh dear, Isabel must come!" cried the Misses Featherstone, almost together. "We have lots of things to talk about, haven't we, Isabel? But when are you coming to us for good? When are you coming to stay at Featherstone?"

Isabel looked at Sir George before she answered these questions, but Sir George turned away his head. He was, indeed, exceedingly annoyed that Isabel should smile on a man like Mr. Featherstone. Isabel, the practised coquette, now blushed and cast down her eyes.

"Sir George, I suppose, is already tired of us?" she said, hesitatingly, "so perhaps—"

"Nay," said Sir George, quickly, a sudden flush dyeing his usually pale face, as Isabel paused. "You know that is not so, Miss Trevor. As long as you will honour my dull house with your presence, need I say how heartily welcome you are? And need I say

also," he added, with a courteous bow to the Misses Featherstone, "that all your friends are equally welcome?"

"And yet you won't come to us?" said Lucinda Featherstone (the second girl), with her good-natured smile.

"I go nowhere," answered Sir George, "I am, as you know, a complete wanderer, and have lived too long out of civilized society to care now to go into it. But do not allow me," he went on, "to interfere in any way with your arrangements. I trust that you will come here as often as you wish during Miss Trevor's visit."

"Well, we'll take you at your word," said Lucinda, smiling again, "and when you are tired of us you must turn us out."

"Very well," said Sir George, almost smiling. Then presently the girls, at Isabel's proposal, retired into the small drawing-room, the Featherstones going into raptures over the treasures it contained.

"I remember poor mamma talking about the china," said Lucinda. "But for years

and years no one has ever seen it. Lady Hamilton, Sir George's mother, received no one after the first year or two that Sir George remained abroad."

"How strange that he should remain abroad so long!" said Isabel, inquiringly, looking at Lucinda, who laughed and nodded her head.

"People say there was a reason," answered Lucinda. "So mind," she added the next minute, half in fun, and yet with a touch of warning in her voice, "don't fall in love with Sir George, for he is known not to be a marrying man."

"People always know such wonderful things," said Isabel, coldly. "Why, may I ask, Lucinda, is Sir George supposed not to be a marrying man?"

"Because people say he is married already," answered Lucinda, promptly. "Ever since I was grown up, and able to understand things, there has been a mystery about Sir George Hamilton. It was said, you know, that it broke his mother's heart, whatever it

was. At all events, he never returned home during her lifetime."

"It is a strange story," said Isabel, thoughtfully.

"Yes, and he is a strange man. Handsome, isn't he, though, and it's such a jolly place! I know of no place to be compared to Massam."

"It is a fine place," answered Isabel, and she went to the window to look out. Yes, it was a fine place she was thinking, and perhaps she was trying to be its mistress when Sir George had no power to offer to make her so. "He admires me, I am certain," went on Isabel's reflections. "Ah! well, we shall see."

The visit of the Featherstones ended in Isabel, Mr. Trevor, and Hilda Marston promising to dine at Featherstone on the following day. Sir George again declined to avail himself of Mr. Featherstone's hospitality, and the Misses Featherstone during their drive home declared that they were heartily glad that he had done so.



"We'll be much jollier without him," said Lucinda.

"It makes one dull to look at him," declared Patty, the eldest daughter.

"And with all his money!" said Mr. Featherstone. "Why, if I'd a third of it I'd be the jolliest dog alive!"

"I gave Isabel Trevor a hint," said Lucinda, with a little nod.

"You don't think she has any idea of him?" asked Mr. Featherstone.

"I don't *think*," answered Lucinda, with another nod, "I'm sure."

"Pooh!" said Mr. Featherstone, "she needn't, then. But," he added, "there's one thing I tell you, she's the handsomest woman I ever saw!"

"Indeed, papa!" said Patty. "Have you lost your heart, then?"

"As for heart, my dear, at my age," answered the reckless Antony, "it doesn't trouble me much. But take her altogether, figure and face, she's the finest woman I ever saw, and if old Trevor would come down handsomely I'd marry her to-morrow."

Both the girls laughed at this. In their way they were fond of this reckless good-for-nothing. They laughed when he came home "screwed," as they called it; laughed at him, and with him, but they would have clung to him whatever had befallen him. They were not bad girls, in fact, but had been brought up in a bad atmosphere. "We can always be stable boys, whatever happens," Lucinda used to say; and they were no doubt not unfitted for that capacity, for they knew as much about horses and stables as most men of their age. Men called them jolly, and kind women pitied them for their motherless and unprotected condition, and unkind women called them "fast." The truth was, they were both "fast" and "jolly," but there was something left in them for kind women to love still. One of these good qualities was their real affection for their reckless, good-looking father.

"Dear old boy," Patty said, in answer to her father's proposal to marry Isabel (if Mr. Trevor would come down handsomely), "don't you think of her. Lu told you once

before, didn't she, that Isabel Trevor was the vainest and handsomest girl she ever saw? Well, nothing truer was ever said. When she marries, or I'm much mistaken, she'll marry for ambition."

"Pooh! How can one girl tell what another will do?" said the once handsome Antony. He was a good-looking fellow still he was thinking at that moment—and why shouldn't he "go in" for an heiress as well as another?

Patty and Lu, you see, were wiser. They saw the "dear old man's" face was red and his hair grizzled, and that generally an odour of brandy lingered about him. If it had been for his good they would not have minded his marrying, but they were vexed to think of his making a fool of himself about Isabel Trevor.

Yet they did everything in their power to entertain her handsomely on the following day. There were frequent unpleasantnesses with the village butcher at Featherstone Hall, and he did not call for orders as regu-

larly as such good customers as they seemed to be might have expected; but on this occasion Patty and Lu exerted themselves, and everything necessary appeared. It was astonishing with how little ready money these girls got on. True, there was nearly always plenty of game in the larder, and ducks and chickens and pigs about the premises. Spiteful people said that Patty and Lu Featherstone reared chickens and ducks, and sold them in private to a carrier, who re-sold them to the poultry dealers, and that thus their dress and entertainments might be accounted for. If it were so, it was no disgrace to Patty and Lu, who could not help their reckless father having involved them in such difficulties as they found themselves placed in.

They did their best also in inviting guests to meet Isabel and her father. On such a short invitation this was very difficult, and spite of all their exertions, the party dwindled down to the vicar of the parish and his wife, and his wife's half brother, Capt. Warrington.

The vicar of the parish, the Rev. James Woodford, is easily described. He was a meek little man, with weak hair, eyes, and voice. His opinions on all religious subjects were influenced by his bishop, and on all domestic subjects by his wife.

His wife was a tall, slender young woman, with light hair, and insignificant features, who evidently thought herself a beauty. She was the daughter of a colonel in the army, and had lived much in garrison towns, and now found the vicarage at Featherstone almost intolerably dull. Yet the vicarage was the prettiest old house imaginable, covered with ivy, and standing amid its old-fashioned fertile garden and grounds. Any sensible woman might have made herself happy there, with her husband and children; but Mrs. Woodford was not sensible. She had married poor Mr. Woodford because she could get nobody else; and it was, therefore, plainly her duty to have made the best of him and his surroundings. But she did not do this. She grumbled at the want of

society, and grumbled at the society when she was asked into it. Thus she was not popular, and happened, as usual, to be disengaged when the Featherstones' invitation to meet the Trevors and Hilda Marston arrived.

Captain Warrington, her brother, deserves a paragraph to himself. He was only Mrs. Woodford's half-brother, and his mother had been very rich, and her mother very poor. This, of course, made a great social difference between them. In fact, Miss Selina Warrington married a country parson, and Hugh Warrington went into the Life Guards. He was a remarkably handsome man ; tall and straight, and wonderfully well-made, while his features were singularly regular, and his expression good.

"But I have freckles," he once said pathetically, to a lady on her telling him that he ought to make a splendid photograph. These freckles, however, of which he complained were not visible on the clear, brown skin to any eyes but his own. But this

speech may serve to describe what he was. He affected, in fact, to be languid and conceited, but a good judge of character saw through the affectation, marking the good-tempered satire that lurked in the handsome eyes and stole round the corners of the full handsome lips. He was between twenty-eight and thirty when Isabel Trevor first met him, and she was instantly struck when he entered the Featherstones' drawing-room by his great personal attractions.

The drawing-room and everything about Featherstone Hall was shabby. The poor girls had no money to buy new curtains and covers with. Their own dress was procured with difficulty, and so they could not afford to adorn the old house. Yet they were as hospitable and jolly as if their purses were as full as their hearts were light. They made the best of their situation, if Mrs. Woodford did not. They were charmed, too, to have got Captain Warrington to dine with them. Captain Warrington, indeed, was a rare visitor to his brother-in-law's vicarage, and

had only run down for a couple of days at the earnest and even pathetic entreaties of his sister, to act as godfather to her little newly-born son. Indeed, such pathetic terms had Mrs. Woodford used when entreating her brother to come that the good-natured soldier felt he could not resist them ; and, armed with a silver goblet and various presents, he had arrived at the vicarage on the day previous to the one on which the Featherstones gave their entertainment. Thus the Guardsman was a lucky and un hoped-for addition to the party. Isabel Trevor, who had gone unwillingly, expecting to be bored, brightened up at the sight of him, and felt annoyed when her elderly red-faced host offered his arm to conduct her to the dining-room. Mr. Trevor was requested to take in Mrs. Woodford ; Captain Warrington, Patty Featherstone ; and the poor little vicar had to offer an arm to both Lucinda Featherstone and Hilda Marston.

“ I’ve got more than my share of good things,” he said, nervously, as he endeavoured



to hold his thin arms at the same level with the tall Lu on one side, and the middle-heighted Hilda on the other.

"The Church always does," laughed jovial Antony Featherstone; and the poor vicar gave a meek little giggle in reply.

The Featherstones had the art of making things go off pleasantly. They were lively, talkative, and rather noisy, and they therefore overpowered Mrs. Woodford's complaints, made to Mr. Trevor in her thin high-pitched voice, of the want of society at Featherstone, and drew out Captain Warrington, who, in his affected drawl, told some good stories with a considerable amount of spirit and humour.

In the meanwhile, Mr. Featherstone was making, or rather attempting to make, love to Isabel. Poor Mr. Featherstone! The compliments he paid were very coarse compliments, and the love he made was not suited to such a woman as Isabel. She might have been amused with him for a few minutes if she had had nothing else to do, but she was not amused at him leering at her with his

bloodshot eyes before Captain Hugh Warrington. She therefore snubbed him unmercifully. Captain Hugh saw this, and appreciated it, and when the gentlemen rejoined the ladies in the drawing-room he sank at once languidly down on the couch by Isabel's side.

"I may talk to you, may I not?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Isabel, smiling, and opening her large fan with a jerk.

"Thank you," said Captain Hugh.

"Do you mean to stay long in this part of the country?" asked Isabel.

"I came for two days," answered the handsome Guardsman, "but if I find it agreeable I can remain longer."

"Perhaps you will find it agreeable," said Isabel, smiling again.

"Perhaps I shall," said Captain Warrington, "and perhaps—as I understand we are neighbours—we may sometimes see each other during the next few days?"

In such common-place words did Isabel begin her acquaintance with Captain Hugh Warrington. But then it must be admitted

that most of our acquaintances begin in common-place and uninteresting language. But she admired him. He was young and handsome; and instead of Sir George's cloudy brow and moody manner, he was lively, easily amused, and apparently as well pleased with Isabel's society as she was with his.

Mr. Trevor fidgeted and frowned when he heard Isabel's low laugh ring again and again through the shabbily furnished drawing-room.

Good heavens! he thought, was this foolish girl going to upset all his calculations and throw away such a fine position as she now had the chance of by her vain folly? He looked uneasily at Hilda, but Hilda's eyes were cast down, and gave no answering glance. Then he crossed the room and went to her side.

"Who is that person," he said, "with whom Isabel appears to be carrying on such a very animated conversation?"

"He is the vicar's brother-in-law, I believe," answered Hilda.

"She is extremely injudicious," said Mr. Trevor, in a tone that Hilda well understood. Mr. Trevor expected she would become his wife Hilda knew from that tone, and her face flushed and her heart beat quickly when she heard it.

After this there was music, Lucinda Featherstone playing one of the old pieces she had learnt at school, and which Isabel Trevor remembered so well, as she informed Captain Warrington in a half whisper. Then there was conversation again, more or less animated, and by-and-bye Mr. Trevor rose, and after looking at his watch, proposed to Isabel to order the carriage.

"Is it time to go?" replied Isabel, glancing up at her father. "The evening seems to have passed very quickly somehow."

"It is a quarter to eleven," said the squire, stiffly.

"Pray stay the quarter," said Captain Warrington, addressing the squire; "the evening has seemed so short."

"It is quite time to go," answered the

squire, yet more stiffly ; and Isabel gave a little shrug of her fine shoulders.

" You see what a tyrant I have to deal with," she said, smiling at Captain Warrington. " How do you return to the vicarage ?" she went on.

" As my worthy brother-in-law has not been amongst the lucky servants of the Church, I suppose we must walk," answered Captain Hugh Warrington, also shrugging his shoulders.

" But is it a fine evening ?" said Isabel. " If it rains, or if Mrs. Woodford and you will accept a seat in the Massam carriage, there is plenty of room for us all."

" Scarcely, I think, my dear Isabel," said Mr. Trevor, repressively.

" See if it rains," said Isabel to Captain Warrington, ignoring her father's remark.

" It rains," said Captain Hugh, solemnly, after he had inspected the weather through the window, and then returned to Isabel's side. Upon which Isabel went up to the parson's wife.

"Mrs. Woodford," she said, addressing this lady, who was fanning herself disconsolately, "your brother tells me it rains, so I trust that you will accept a seat in the Massam carriage."

"I'm sure if it will not inconvenience you I shall feel exceedingly obliged. I am so unaccustomed to this kind of thing. I feel it so much." And Mrs. Woodford sighed.

"But, my dear," said poor little Woodford, advancing towards his wife and rubbing his hands together, "there are so many of us——"

"You can walk," replied Mrs. Woodford ; and so it was finally arranged. The parson, with the Massam footman behind him, walked to the vicarage, which was only about a quarter of a mile distant from Featherstone Hall ; the squire and the three ladies went inside the carriage, and Captain Hugh Warrington sat beside the coachman. It was a miserable drive for Hilda Marston. She sat next Mr. Trevor, on the back seat of the carriage, and Mr. Trevor had the

audacity to take hold of her hand ! The poor girl turned red and then pale. She dared not take away her hand—the poor little hand that was not by any means at home in the rich man's clasp. "Oh, what shall I do?" Hilda was thinking, "what shall I do?" She knew what she ought to do, but that meant giving up home and help for little Ned. So she sat still, while Mrs. Woodford kept complaining, in her thin, high-pitched voice, of the society which, as a country clergyman's wife, she was forced to endure, complaints of which, however, Isabel took but scant notice.

At last the carriage stopped at the gate of the vicarage, and Captain Hugh Warrington descended from his seat by the coachman and opened the carriage door to assist his sister out of it.

"Good-bye, Miss Trevor," he said, after he had performed this duty, holding out his hand to Isabel.

"Good-bye," she answered, and that was all ; but something in the way they both

spoke made Mr. Trevor more uneasy than he had been in the drawing-room.

In the meanwhile, at Massam, Sir George was restlessly awaiting their arrival. The great house had felt doubly desolate to him during their absence. Isabel's presence there for the last few days had filled his life with a new excitement at least, and as he wandered up and down the library he was beginning to shape into form the vague feelings with which, in spite of himself, she had inspired him.

"If she only loved me," he was thinking. He knew enough of women to know that when they love they will forgive much ; and Isabel had done her best during the last few days to make Sir George think that he was anything but indifferent to her.

"But perhaps it is Massam she thinks of," presently thought Sir George with some bitterness,—Massam, the splendid home, that now seemed no home to him. "But I have no right to marry," he reflected the next minute, "none, none—and yet she is so beautiful !"



Yes, there it was. It was her beauty, and but her beauty, that bewitched him. Sir George felt distrust in her, even now. The subtle, God-given instinct, with which we recognize truth, warned him already; but another instinct carried him on. She fascinated him, in fact, just as she fascinated Philip Hayward, and almost every other man she had tried to win.

When Sir George heard the sound of the carriage wheels announce the return of the party from Featherstone, he went down at once to the hall to receive his guests. For his amusement, Isabel by-and-bye gave a satirical account of their entertainment, to which Sir George listened with a smile.

"And who is Captain Warrington?" he asked.

"A very handsome young man," replied Isabel, smiling.

"A forward person, I thought," said Mr. Trevor, so testily that Sir George remarked it.

"Well, you shall judge for yourself," said

Isabel, still smiling and looking at Sir George, "for Captain Warrington is coming here to call upon me. He complained so piteously of the dulness of his life at his sister's house that I took compassion on him—so I hope you won't turn him out, Sir George?"

"Any friend of yours will always be welcome here," said Sir George, gravely. But he was displeased. He scarcely admitted it to himself, but he was jealous already of Isabel Trevor.

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## CHAPTER XII.

HUGH WARRINGTON.

BUT he felt yet more displeased, and more jealous the next day. In passing the door of the billiard-room, about twelve o'clock, he heard the crack of the balls, and, on looking in to see who were the players, saw Isabel, cue in hand, with her fair face flushed, while leaning on the table by her side was a tall, handsome stranger.

Isabel looked up as Sir George opened the room door, and at once beckoned to her host to come in. •

“Come and see me play,” she said, “I have got a splendid adversary, Captain Warrington——Sir George Hamilton.”

As Isabel introduced them, the two men looked at each other and bowed, Sir George

coldly and stiffly, Captain Warrington courteously and good-temperedly. Sir George, in fact, was jealous, but Captain Warrington was not. Sir George avoided women in general, and Captain Warrington sought them. Thus a man accustomed to associate with the belles of London society saw nothing so wonderful in Isabel's beauty, as the cold proud man did who shrank from all communion with his equals. Captain Warrington admired Isabel, but that was all, while Sir George was gradually permitting himself to feel for her a deep and absorbing passion.

"I am considered a good player," continued Isabel, "why don't you play with me, sometimes, Sir George?"

"You have got an efficient substitute apparently," answered Sir George. "I will not spoil your game." And, with a slight bow, he turned and left the room.

"So that is Sir George Hamilton?" said Captain Warrington, after he had done so. "Not a bad looking fellow, eh? There are queer stories about him, aren't there?"

"What stories?" asked Isabel, quickly.

"Don't know. About some lady or other, I believe. But it's your turn to play. Hadn't we better go on with the game?"

Isabel did go on with the game, and she also went on coquetting with Captain Hugh Warrington. Was Sir George making a fool of her, she was thinking all the time? There must be some truth in these reports that she was continually hearing about him. She was an excellent player at billiards in general, but she did not play well that morning. "I will not trouble about Sir George any more," she decided, and so when they met at lunch, she addressed her host with studied coldness. Sir George instantly noticed the change in her manner, and his restlessness and impatience under it soon grew painful. He thought that he had offended her in the billiard-room, and tried to conciliate her, but Isabel's manner continued carelessly indifferent.

"I am going to ride over to Featherstone, this afternoon, papa," she said to Mr. Trevor during the meal, "the girls there have got up

a riding party. We are going to see some abbey or other in the neighbourhood."

"Are you going, Sir George?" asked Mr. Trevor, with some discomfort in his tone, addressing their host.

"I have not even been asked to go," replied Sir George, with a forced smile.

"Oh, it's only the Featherstone girls and myself and—Captain Warrington, I believe," said Isabel.

Upon this Sir George bit his lips nervously, and his face flushed.

"Oh—" said Mr. Trevor, disapprovingly.

"May I ride Monaco?" asked Isabel, turning to Sir George with something more like her old manner to him.

"Certainly," answered Sir George, rising and ringing the bell, and when a servant appeared he ordered Monaco (his favourite horse) to be saddled for Miss Trevor's use, and having done this, with a word of apology to Mr. Trevor, he left his guests to themselves.

"My dear Isabel," said Mr. Trevor, in his severest tone, as the door closed behind their

host, "do you think you are acting courteously to Sir George in making arrangements in which he is in no way consulted?"

Isabel shrugged her shoulders, as her father spoke.

"I am getting a little weary of Sir George," she said, "and feel inclined for a little more lively conversation than he favoured me with."

"I—think you are very injudicious," said Mr. Trevor, turning extremely red, and stammering with indignation.

"Why?" asked Isabel, coolly helping herself to a bunch of grapes.

"I—I—repeat what I have said," replied the squire, rising indignantly from the table. "I repeat,—you are highly injudicious." And, having said this, Mr. Trevor quitted the room, leaving Isabel and Hilda Marston alone.

"What a rage papa is in!" said Isabel, with a light laugh, going on with her grapes.

Hilda moved uncomfortably—in fact, she did not know what to say.

"Why should I never speak to any one but

Sir George, I wonder?" went on Isabel, still eating her grapes. "Captain Warrington amuses me, and I like being amused."

"Perhaps Mr. Trevor thinks—" hesitated Hilda.

"That I am losing a chance of Massam," laughed Isabel, rising also. "Ah, well, it can't be helped." And with another laugh she turned away.

She had, in fact, arranged this riding party, as she called it, with Captain Hugh Warrington alone. They had agreed in the morning, over the billiard table, that Captain Hugh was to borrow a horse of Mr. Featherstone, as his brother-in-law, Mr. Woodford, was not possessed of one, and that he was to meet Isabel on such and such a spot on the road between Featherstone and Massam.

"If the girls would like to come you can bring them," said Isabel, in her careless, coquettish way, to Captain Hugh, as she was making these arrangements.

"Needn't be very pressing about their coming, I suppose?" said Captain Hugh,



looking at Isabel with his handsome eyes and smiling as he spoke.

"I leave it in your hands," replied Isabel; and so Captain Hugh never said anything about this meeting to the girls at all.

Thus, when Isabel mounted on Monaco, and with one of the Massam grooms behind her (splendidly mounted also), rode up to the appointed spot, though somewhat past the appointed hour, they found Captain Hugh gazing disconsolately at the partridges over the hedge of an adjoining field mounted on a "screw" (as Isabel would have called it) from the Featherstone stables.

"I am weary with waiting," he said, affectedly, as Isabel, bright and beautiful, as usual, approached him.

"Are you?" she laughed. "Well, you see, I have come at last."

"I was just going away in despair," said Captain Hugh. "And after mounting this animal" (and he touched the poor horse which he was riding) "for your sake, I think it was cruel of you to keep me so long."

"I must try to console you," answered Isabel, smiling. "So—that was all they could give you?" she went on, critically inspecting Captain Hugh's horse.

"Unforeseen and unexpected misfortunes had happened to the whole of the rest of Mr. Featherstone's stud," replied Captain Hugh, "which he and I equally regretted."

"Perhaps they are in the hands of the bailiffs," said Isabel, with a laugh, who had heard something of the Featherstones' embarrassments since she had been at Massam.

"Perhaps," replied Captain Hugh, "and the bailiffs have been too knowing to lay hands on this one." And he once more slightly touched the poor animal on which he was mounted.

But presently they forgot all about their horses. Isabel intended to be charming, and she perfectly succeeded. You see ordinary and common-place words sometimes sound charming from lovely lips, and speeches that would be called harsh and cutting coming from the plain or old, do not seem so when

the voice is fresh or young. Isabel, tired of having made love to Sir George, with seemingly so little result, now amused herself by making love to a younger and apparently a more susceptible man. But it is curious how these outer shells in which we are enveloped will sometimes deceive. Captain Hugh Warrington, with his large pensive grey eyes, which looked so full of feeling, was by no means an impulsive person. He, in fact, never dreamed of falling in love with Isabel Trevor as they rode in the misty October evening through the Yorkshire lanes. He admired her, but she was not the kind of woman he would have given his heart to, if he had had any thought of giving it away.

Sir George Hamilton, on the contrary, with all his gloom and reticence, was really both impulsive and passionate. He had left the luncheon table feeling angry and jealous almost beyond control, because Isabel was going to ride with Captain Warrington—so angry and jealous that he did not even

condescend to tell her his news. This news, that he had just received by telegram, was that Philip Hayward, the tutor, was then on his road to Massam.

Thus, when Isabel, flushed and smiling, with Captain Warrington by her side, was returning in the gathering twilight towards the Park, a waggonette passed them — a waggonette in which two gentlemen were seated, and whom Isabel instantly recognized, even before they took off their hats in token of her presence.

These were Hayward and Sir George, Sir George having gone to the station to meet the tutor, and with a start Hayward also recognized Isabel as they passed the riders.

“That is Miss Trevor, is it not?” he said a moment later, with quivering lips.

“Yes,” answered Sir George, with sudden reserve and coldness, for before this meeting with Isabel he had been exerting himself to be kind and attentive to Hayward.

“And the gentleman?” asked Hayward.

"I do not know," replied Sir George. "Some officer, I think, that she met the other day at Featherstone." And as he spoke the tutor suppressed a restless sigh.

Living down at Sanda, living in a lonely and secluded spot, and where the great social differences which divide men were almost forgotten, Philip Hayward, the tutor, had lately been nursing a sweet dream of love. There was something almost pathetic in its simplicity. He had read and dreamed of men and women loving each other too well to part, in spite of all obstacles and all laws, and he had told himself that his love was as strong and great as any man or woman's who had ever lived. He had believed in Isabel's sweet glances, in her few sugared words, in the rosebud that she had given him in jest, but which he treasured now as most men treasure gold. It came upon him, therefore, as a kind of shock when he saw her riding with another man—a shock that made his lips quiver and his heart beat with a dull cold pain.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### FALSE !

ISABEL was very gracious in her manner to the tutor when they met at dinner. She smiled upon him, and all the world seemed very bright and beautiful to Philip Hayward in that hour. He scarcely noticed the gloomy looks of his patron, Sir George. He did not notice, or at least did not care for, Mr. Trevor's marked coldness of manner, and he scarcely noticed that Hilda Marston's soft clear eyes wandered more than once involuntarily to his face. The foolish girl was comparing him with Mr. Trevor. She was listening to his simple words, words which told of thought, of strong will, of deep and tender feelings—feelings which she knew

were all wasted on the heartless, beautiful woman by his side.

Then she looked at the Squire of Sanda, her lover. For his years, Mr. Trevor was a good-looking man. He was tall, thin, grey-haired, and gentlemanly. He had a high nose, a clear fresh skin, a narrow forehead, and small, meagre, pale-coloured eyes.

Then, when he spoke. Hilda's ears were naturally sharpened just now, and she blushed and bit her lips when she heard his shallow pompous words. Not that any particular fault could have been alleged against his conversation, but it was like an endless echo. Nothing new or fresh ever flowed from Mr. Trevor's thin lips. And poor, clever Hilda! Was she to sit all her life listening to this correct but weary babble? The poor girl sighed a heavy audible sigh when she thought of it. She was an honest girl, this—honest and pure, and she began at that moment to think that even little Ned's welfare could be purchased at too heavy a price.

"Your brother sent his best love to you, Miss Marston," said Philip Hayward to her presently, in his sweet, clear-toned voice.

"Did he?" she answered. "Dear little Ned!" And she sighed again.

This sigh reached Mr. Trevor's ears.

"I trust that young Edward is fairly attentive to his studies, Mr. Hayward?" asked the squire.

"Oh, yes," answered Hayward with a smile. "As attentive as we can expect a fine, bold, healthy lad to be."

"Which means, I fear, that he loves play better than work," said the squire.

"We all do that, Mr. Trevor," said Hayward, with another smile; "only we grown-up people know that we must work or be nothing."

"No doubt," replied the squire, "industrious habits are essential to success."

There, you see, he talked as well as his neighbours; and yet what a dull dreary man the Squire of Sanda was!



"I hope you cane him well, Mr. Hayward?" said Isabel, smiling.

"I have never struck a boy, and I never will," replied Hayward gravely.

"Of course not. I was only jesting," said Isabel.

"Yes, I knew you were only jesting," said Hayward, looking at her with his thoughtful trustful eyes.

What a sweet expression he had! You read this young man's chivalrous simple nature in every line of his pleasant face. He was not handsome—not absolutely handsome, at least—and yet he was so goodlooking that he was generally called so. He was still very pale from the effects of his late accident, and his arm was in a sling; but this first evening at Massam he looked so bright, happy, and confident. He was so proud, poor fellow; proud because he believed he was not quite indifferent to Isabel.

Sir George, indeed, grew pale and bit his lip when he saw the smiles Isabel lavished on the tutor. He was a madman, he told

himself, utterly mad, to be jealous of every look that this woman bestowed on another man, and yet he could not help himself. Isabel, who was tired of him, as she tired of most things, never noticed his restless ways and agitated manner. She was amusing herself with Hayward, and gratified at the unmistakable devotion that his looks displayed.

"And how did you leave the 'Spectre,' and the lovely Amelia Shadwell?" asked Isabel, in her careless way, during a pause in the conversation.

"Both very well," answered Hayward, good-naturedly.

"How terribly tired you must have been of Miss Amelia's beef-tea!" went on Isabel, smiling.

"It was very good of her to make it," said Hayward. "I never can repay either Mrs. or Miss Irvine for all their kindness."

"You could repay Miss Irvine, you know," half-whispered Isabel.

"You should not say that," answered Hayward, with sudden gravity.

"Nay, if you look so serious, I shall think you mean to do so," went on Isabel, jestingly. But to this Hayward made no reply. He only looked at Isabel with some reproach in his grey eyes, who dropped hers as he did so with affected penitence.

"You must forgive me," she said in a low voice; "you know I am always jesting."

"You must not jest about my kind friends any more, then," answered Hayward. He was indeed too chivalrous to allow it, and yet many a man would have smiled and even jested over the remembrance of his parting with Miss Amelia Irvine.

This young woman having made up her mind that she was in love with the tutor, was not one of those who allow "concealment like a worm in the bud to feed on her damask cheek." When Hayward announced his intention of proceeding to Massam, Amelia, indeed, grew desperate, and, bursting into tears, began sobbing bitterly.

"My dear Miss Amelia," said Hayward, approaching her, though it must be admitted that he was very much afraid to do so.

"Don't go," cried Amelia. "Hayward, don't!" And she threw herself on a seat, stiffening her form rigidly, and making contortions as if she were about to choke.

"But I must," said Hayward, nervously. "You see, my dear Miss Amelia, Sir George Hamilton expects me, and it would never do for me to offend him."

"Will you return?" said Amelia, still apparently choking.

"Of course, I will return," answered Hayward, kindly; and, indeed, it was only after making the most solemn promises to do so that he was allowed to go away.

"She is only a child," Hayward told himself in good-natured excuse for her conduct, though in reality Miss Amelia was at least twenty—"a kind-hearted child, to whom I must always be indebted for her goodness to me." And in this kindly spirit the tutor endeavoured to think of Amelia

Shadwell. Thus he would not even allow Isabel to laugh at her ; and Hilda Marston liked him all the better for the way in which he spoke of this foolish girl.

"Well, what do you think of our hero?" Isabel said to Hilda when they returned to the small drawing-room together.

"I think what I always thought," said Hilda, quietly, "even before he was a hero."

"And what do you think?" asked Isabel, surveying herself in one of the long glasses.

"That he is a gentleman," replied Hilda.

"A gentleman!" repeated Isabel, arranging a curl, "that does not express much."

"To me it does," answered Hilda, quickly, "for I know few gentlemen."

Upon this Isabel turned round and looked at her companion, whose face had suddenly flushed, and whose eyes were sparkling.

"Indeed!" said Isabel. "Do you mean that you know few who possess the qualities that you think a gentleman should possess?"

"I know few," said Hilda, with a little quiver in her voice, "on whose lips you never

hear a mean or ignoble word, few who regard the humblest woman with respect and honour, and in whose simple assertion I could entirely trust."

"So that is your idea of a gentleman!" said Isabel, again turning her attention to the glass. "And you think that Mr. Hayward is all this, do you?"

"I have always seen him act as a gentleman," answered Hilda; and after saying this she left the room, Isabel looking after her as she did so with an amused smile.

"So, she has lost her heart," she was thinking. "Poor Hilda Marston, she may spare herself the trouble." And she smiled again, for she knew it was not Hilda that Hayward cared for.

But the very fact that she thought another woman did like him added piquancy to Isabel's wish to entirely captivate the tutor. Sometimes she had read unspoken disapproval of her ways in Hilda's grey eyes, and as Isabel deemed such disapproval impertinence, she was not displeased to have

it in her power to revenge herself by tacitly wounding her humble companion. Never, therefore, did Isabel make herself more charming than she did this evening to the penniless tutor. And what could he think? He heard her speak in tones of polite indifference to the owner of the broad acres of Massam. He met her sweet smiling glances, listened to her winning, flattering tongue, and the old infatuation grew stronger, the old passionate admiration more powerful, in the young man's heart.

During the whole of the next day it was the same thing. Isabel had agreed to ride again in the afternoon with her military admirer, Captain Warrington, but in the morning she received a note of apology from him: he had been recalled to town to be present at a court-martial; but he trusted to meet Miss Trevor again, and so on. Thus Isabel was thrown back for amusement on the unfortunate tutor. She drove him over during the morning in the late Lady Hamilton's pony chaise, to see the Feather-

stones, and told them before him of his bravery in rescuing Sir George Hamilton.

"Why did you tell them that?" he asked, as they were returning from this visit.

"Why should I not?" answered Isabel.

"Why should people not know how brave you are?"

"I fear bravery had very little to do with it," said Hayward, casting down his eyes.

"What had to do with it, then?" asked Isabel, in her bright, fearless way.

"I went because you bade me go," answered Hayward, with a passionate ring in his voice that almost touched Isabel's cold heart.

"No, no, that is folly," she murmured, and she jerked the reins that she was holding nervously as she spoke.

"Is it all folly, Isabel?" asked Hayward.

"Of course it is," she answered in her old coquettish manner. "But I am glad, sir, you went at my bidding," she added. "Remember, you have always to do my bidding."

"Yes, I will always do it," answered Hayward; and he stooped down and kissed



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"Yes, I will always do it," answered Hayward; and he stooped down and kissed

the small gauntleted hand that held the reins.

Thus you see Isabel was playing with fire. She was arousing feelings for her amusement that she could not quench. She had done this with Sir George Hamilton, but his gloom and taciturnity had disgusted her; and now she was doing it again with a noble honest-hearted man.

Sir George watched all the day with passionate anger and jealousy her intimacy with the tutor. He began to believe that they must have been lovers long ago; to torment himself, in fact, with a hundred fancies. But Mr. Hannaway, the lawyer, dined at Massam the second evening that Hayward was there, and the acute man of the world had a word to say to his patron on the subject.

After dinner Isabel was playing billiards with Hayward, and Sir George and Mr. Hannaway were watching the game, though at a considerable distance from the players. Sir George's face was pale, and his brows were bent. Mr. Hannaway, having just

enjoyed a good dinner, was rosy and smiling, and in the humour to do a good turn to everyone around him.

"That seems an intelligent young fellow," he said to Sir George, alluding to Hayward.

"Yes," answered Sir George; "do you think him good-looking?"

Mr. Hannaway's quick ears detected the anxiety expressed in the last sentence, and he answered affably,

"Yes—ah yes, tolerably so. It is good-natured of Miss Trevor to be so kind to him."

"Perhaps she likes him," answered Sir George, with a forced smile.

"Or perhaps she likes somebody else, and is too proud to show it, eh, Sir George?" suggested the acute man of law.

Sir George made no answer to this, but the idea was balm and pleasantness to his soul. What if this were true, he thought? He remembered at this moment how she had asked him to be her friend in the conservatory; how she had seemed to care for him then, and how he had repelled



her kindness. Perhaps it was but her maiden pride all this indifference, he began to argue—watching with eager eyes the beautiful smiling face, and supple graceful form.

By chance Isabel's eyes fell on his eager, anxious, set white face. The expression there of deep and concentrated emotion immediately attracted her attention, and she smiled, calling Sir George with a gesture to her side.

"Shall we have a game now, Sir George?" she said. "I have beaten Mr. Hayward. You have never once played with me."

"No," he answered, in an agitated voice; "but do not let us play. Miss Trevor," he went on, in a low earnest tone, "I wish to say a few words to you—I must say a few words to you!"

Mr. Hannaway by this time had advanced towards Hayward, and had engaged him in conversation. Isabel glanced for a moment at the tutor, and then said—

"What is it you wish to say, Sir George? I am—always ready, you know, to listen."

"Not here," he answered hurriedly; "I cannot say what I would say to you here. You once said you were fond of flowers," he went on; "will you let me gather some now?"

"Yes," said Isabel, slowly. She saw something momentous was coming; and Mr. Hannaway, whose face was turned towards Sir George and herself, perhaps saw this also.

"Let us try our luck, Mr. Hayward," he said, taking up a cue. "I am no great player, but I feel in the humour to try my luck to-night."

Hayward glanced at Isabel, but he only saw her talking apparently quietly to their host. He had monopolized her nearly all day, he remembered, and so he smiled pleasantly at Mr. Hannaway.

"I am a bad player also," he said, "but I shall be glad to play."

As the two men commenced their game, Sir George offered his arm in silence to Isabel. She took it gravely. She was speculating on what he was going to say; was

interested in the sudden change which had come over him. "Is he going to tell me the secret, I wonder?" thought Isabel—"the secret that people are always hinting at to me, about his life?"

She could feel his arm tremble as he led her down the dimly-lighted corridors of the house. He went straight on until they came to the left wing, and then entered the morning-room, closing the door behind them. This room opened into the small conservatory, where Isabel had gathered the flowers on the first evening that she had spent at Massam, and where she had told Sir George she had wished to be his friend.

Sir George was thinking of that interview now, of that and of other things. He placed a seat for Isabel, and then with sudden vehemence took her hand.

"Isabel," he said, his voice trembling and broken with emotion, "do you remember what you once said to me in this room?"

"What was it, Sir George?" asked Isabel.

"You—a young and lovely girl," went on

Sir George, with increasing agitation, "told me—a man old before my time—that you wished to be my friend. Do you still wish this, Isabel?" he continued; "or are you changed?"

"I thought that—you were changed, Sir George," answered Isabel.

"No, no. But perhaps I am changed," he added, and his voice sank almost to a whisper; "for now I know your power."

Isabel's heart gave a great, triumphant throb as these words reached her ears.

"You mean?" she said, and she looked at him with her bright, inquiring eyes.

"I mean," answered Sir George, "that when you came here—when, in fact, I first knew you, I was, I felt, too old—not in age, perhaps, exactly—but, Isabel, I have had cares and grief, such cares and grief that I cannot tell you!" And Sir George covered his face, apparently overcome with emotion.

"You mean," said Isabel, speaking as no loving woman could have spoken, "that there is an obstacle between us?"

"Yes," answered Sir George, in brief and bitter tones.

"That cannot be overcome?" went on Isabel.

"No, no; I do not say that!" cried Sir George, passionately—"I do not say that cannot be overcome." And he began to pace the room with hasty strides. "Isabel," he went on, coming back to her after a few moments, and once more taking her hand, "what I mean is this. There was an obstacle; there is an obstacle between us; but—if you love me—"

"Yes?" said Isabel, still inquiringly.

"It need not part us. If you love me—remember, if you love me, Isabel—I ask you to be my wife?"

Isabel was silent for a moment, and she then said—

"And you can legally do this?"

If Sir George had not been so impulsive and passionate, and so deeply in love himself, he might have heard her true answer to this inquiry if she loved him in these cold words.

As it was, his real feelings blinded him to her want of any. He was, in fact, too much excited to notice her calculating coldness.

"Yes, yes," he answered, "I can do this. But remember, Isabel," he went on, almost warningly, "that there is still a great gulf between us. You are young, bright, and happy—I am a gloomy, care-worn man."

"And these stories that they tell about you?" asked Isabel.

"What stories?" replied Sir George, sharply.

"They say," said Isabel, with the fearlessness and defiance of her nature, "that you are connected with some woman."

"The person to whom you allude," answered Sir George, with quivering lips, as Isabel waited to hear his answer, "is dead."

For a moment or two there was silence in the room after this announcement, Sir George beginning once more to pace up and down with restless steps and knitted brow. Then Isabel made up her mind. She followed Sir

George's uneven steps. She laid her white supple hand upon his arm.

"You asked me," she said, "If—if—I were changed to you. I tried to change. They told me even that you had a wife."

"It is a lie!" fiercely interrupted Sir George, grasping her hand.

"But—but I did not know," went on Isabel. "I was afraid to show my feelings—I tried to hide them."

"Then," went on Sir George, with passionate eagerness, "I am not indifferent to you?"

"No," whispered Isabel, and she hid her face upon his arm.

So she won. With a murmured cry of joy Sir George now caught her to his breast, holding her there, and whispering words of love. Then, suddenly, as if some fresh thought had struck him, he put her away; pushing her apart from him for a moment, and looking straight into her lovely face.

"You will never make me jealous, Isabel, will you?" he said.

“Foolish one!” she answered, smiling,  
“why do you ask? You, whom I have  
chosen before all other men!”



## CHAPTER XIV.

### REAPING THE WHIRLWIND.

By Isabel's wish this strange engagement was kept a secret for the next few days between Sir George and herself. She had various reasons for this, one of which was a sort of feeling of compassion, a faint tenderness even (if such a thing as tenderness existed in her cold heart) for Philip Hayward. Yes, she had a sort of liking for the tutor, for the honest, grey, manly eyes that followed her movements with such simple chivalrous devotion. Isabel liked to know her power, and this young man had risked his life to please her. She caught herself wishing sometimes that Hayward was the master of Massam, and not the gloomy man whose

successful love suit had by no means cleared away the cloud from his brow.

But she did not intend to draw back. She loved the world and the world's good things too well to lose the prize that she had won. She meant to marry Sir George Hamilton, but the company of her future husband was often not a little wearisome to her.

Thus things went on for a day or two, Isabel, in the meantime, playing with Hayward's heart as if she were actually studying how, when he learnt the truth, to cost him the most pain. Yet she did not mean this. It was the innate coquetry of her nature that induced her to trifle with this young man's feelings, and not from any wish to hurt him. She liked him too well for that. But she could not resist the pleasure of seeing him devoted to her ; of knowing that these two men were jealous of her slightest word.

But Sir George was too proud to show this now, though he hinted to her with some gravity of manner that it was unwise of her to spend so much of her time with Hayward.

"What do you mean?" asked Isabel, smiling.

Then Sir George ventured to explain. The young man might naturally suppose that she was greatly interested in him, he told Isabel.

"Well, I am interested in him," she answered.

"But is it kind to show this?" urged Sir George. "Hayward is young, perhaps he might even think——" And Sir George paused.

"That I am in love with him, perhaps?" said Isabel, with a mocking laugh. "No, he is not presumptuous enough for that."

This conversation left a painful impression on Sir George's mind. There was a heartless carelessness in Isabel's words that found no echo in his heart. Yet he was jealous of her still, though he did not appear so; and under the influence of this feeling, one evening after dinner, he asked Hayward to stroll out on the terrace with him. Then, when they were there, as they smoked their cigars, he inquired of the tutor if he had come yet to

any decision regarding his future profession. Hayward was surprised for a moment at the question. Sir George had invited him to pay a long visit to Massam, and he had been there little more than a week when Sir George asked it. But before he could reply, the Baronet added—

“The reason I ask you is, that Hannaway told me yesterday that a living, that I have in my gift, will probably soon be vacant. Do you think that you would like to go into the Church?”

Hayward coloured for a moment as Sir George said this, and then answered—

“It is my mother’s dearest wish that I should do so, but I cannot reconcile myself to the idea.”

“Why?” asked Sir George.

“Sir George,” said Hayward, with an earnest ring in his voice, “should a man undertake what he cannot conscientiously fulfil? I cannot satisfy my own mind about what I should then be called upon to teach and preach to others.”

"About hereafter?" said Sir George, slowly.

"Yes—to me so many great questions are unsolved, that I am utterly unfit for the office of a teacher."

Sir George gave a heavy sigh.

"And you have a mother?" he said.

"Yes," answered Hayward, and a faint flush came into his face, and a soft light into his eyes, "a dear little mother. You don't know, perhaps," he added, smiling, "that I am her only child, and she is a widow?"

Sir George sighed again.

"I too was an only child," he said, "and my mother was a widow. But we will not talk of it," he went on, abruptly. "Do you know, Hayward, what I think the greatest curse on earth?" he added.

"No—among the various evils that flesh is heir to, which do you consider the greatest then, Sir George?"

"Memory," answered Sir George, darkly and briefly.

"Memory!" repeated Hayward, as if sur-

prised, "I do not think that, Sir George. What would life be if we had only the present? The past and future from their very dimness always seem to me to have peculiar charms. About the past I try to remember only what was pleasant, and for the future I have always hope."

"It is well—you have a happy disposition, then?" said Sir George.

"Perhaps I have," answered Hayward, and he smiled. Both these men were thinking at that moment about the same woman. Hayward with chivalrous passionate devotion; Sir George with vague passionate disgust and disappointment. He had won her, but she did not satisfy him. He felt there was something wanting even then, in the bright beauty that had enslaved him. But he was enslaved still. Enslaved, though his heart was unquiet within him; though he told himself that there were many things unlovable about Isabel Trevor.

Presently he began talking to Hayward

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again about his future prospects, urging him to accept such a lavish allowance from his hands for the present that Hayward declined it, with modest pride.

"You count my life so cheap then, Hayward," answered Sir George, half bitterly, half sadly, "that you will not allow me in any way to recompense you for saving it?"

"Do not say that, Sir George," said Hayward, in his pleasant voice. "I shall gratefully accept help from you, but only sufficient to supply my moderate wants. And even this," he added, "you must allow me at some future time to repay."

"It is false pride of you to say this, Hayward," said Sir George, almost harshly.

"Is it?" answered Hayward, gently. "Then forgive me, Sir George. But one recompence for my slight service I shall ask," he continued, in his winning manner, "which is to be allowed to call myself your friend."

"That is a poor recompence, indeed," said

Sir George, moodily, turning away his head. "God knows my friendship is of little worth !"

As Sir George said this they were passing near some of the windows of the house, and as they did so there came a little tapping on one of the panes. Both turned their heads at the sound, and then they saw Isabel standing inside the lighted room beyond, and endeavouring to unfasten one of the windows that opened upon the terrace. Sir George at once advanced to her assistance and undid the fastening.

"You must come in," she said, addressing him smilingly, "a visitor has arrived—Mr. Hannaway."

"Oh !" said Sir George, indifferently.

"But he wishes particularly to see you," went on Isabel. "Oh, here he is to answer for himself." And as she spoke the tall form and good-looking face of the lawyer appeared behind Isabel.

"Can I have a word with you, Sir George ?" he said. "I have a letter here,"



he added, "that I think it is important that you should see."

"I will come with you," answered Sir George. "Excuse me!" And he looked at Isabel.

"Certainly," she answered, as Sir George followed Mr. Hannaway. "That is a man," she went on, speaking to Hayward and giving a little nod of her head to indicate the lawyer, "who has a remarkably high opinion of Mr. Hannaway."

"Well, why should he not?" answered Hayward, with a little laugh. "He is good-looking, agreeable, and rich."

"Good-looking, agreeable, and rich," replied Isabel, "and yet to me he has no charm."

Hayward's heart beat fast at these words, and at the subtle insinuation they conveyed.

"And what qualities have charms for you, then—Isabel?" he faltered.

Isabel cast down her eyes. "Why do you ask?" she said. "Everyone knows when they charm."

In her waistband was a faded rose, and

as these words fell from her lips, Hayward saw it.

"Give me that rose, Isabel!" he said, "I am jealous of a flower."

"What folly!" she answered, still without looking up; but she unfastened the rose. "It is dead," she said, holding it towards him.

"It has died where I too would die," murmured Hayward.

"Poor rose!" said Isabel. "Poor Hayward!" she thought, and one of those momentary pangs of regret crossed her heart, as she glanced coily up once more into the young man's earnest face.

"We had better go inside," she said. "We must not forget that propriety in the shape of papa and Miss Marston are watching us."

Indeed, at this moment the squire himself appeared advancing towards the window near where Isabel and Hayward were standing.

"My dear Isabel," he said, "are you not afraid of the chill night air? You are

causing a most serious draught in the room." And the squire shrugged his shoulders.

"My dear papa," answered Isabel, shrugging hers also, "I hope it won't give you rheumatism!"

"Shall I shut the window, Mr. Trevor?" asked Hayward.

"Thank you," replied Mr. Trevor, stiffly; and while Hayward was thus employed, Sir George Hamilton came again into the room, and walked straight up to Isabel.

"Isabel," he said, in a low tone, "will you excuse me if I run up to town for one day?"

"It depends on whom you run with," replied Isabel, looking smilingly at her lover.

"I wish to go with Hannaway," answered Sir George, who looked pale and disturbed. "A letter, an important letter, that he has just shown me, calls me away. But I shall return to-morrow night."

"Very well," said Isabel, still smiling.

"And—will you look after everyone for me?" asked Sir George, hesitatingly, as if he were thinking of a something else.

"Yes, I will make an excellent *châtelaine*, or hostess, or whatever is the right thing," answered Isabel, still lightly.

"And—Isabel—will you come out with me for one moment?" then asked Sir George, this time fixing his eyes on her face.

"Yes," said Isabel, after an instant's hesitation, and she followed him from the room to the corridor outside.

When they were there, Sir George, after glancing round to see that they were alone, put his arms round her.

"Give me one kiss, Isabel," he said, "before we say good-bye!"

Isabel, too, looked round, and then lifted her rosy lips to his.

"Good-bye," she said, but Sir George would not let her go. He held her there to his breast, pale and agitated. Isabel, on the contrary, was quite unmoved. She was a little uncomfortable, perhaps, in Sir George's embrace, but that was all. Through the half-closed door, however, of the small drawing-room that they had just quitted,

she could see the side of the cabinet containing the unset gems that she had often coveted. This reminded her of what Sir George was—the master of all this wealth; and so again she held her lips up for his kiss.

“Good-bye,” she said once more, and Sir George kissed her, pressed her closer in his arms, and then with a murmured word or two bade her farewell. After he was gone, Isabel returned to the drawing-room, and advanced, smilingly, to where her father, Hilda Marston, and Philip Hayward were standing.

“Our host has left me in charge of you all,” she said, “so I hope you mean to make yourselves very agreeable.”

The next day was Sunday—a wet Sunday. In the morning the whole party drove to the parish church, and heard Mr. Woodford’s very mild and inoffensive discourse. Mrs. Woodford, with her insignificant features and faded complexion, was yawning during its delivery on one side of the pulpit, and the beadle on the other. The Featherstone girls were there, but they never yawned. Antony

Featherstone, their father, however, slept through the whole of the parson's discourse. The Squire of Sanda rigidly kept himself awake, as "an example," but his pale eyes winked and blinked unceasingly with their abortive efforts not to close.

"We were the only two really awake, I believe, Mr. Hayward," said Isabel, laughingly, as they drove home.

"My dear Isabel, do not make such foolish assertions," said the squire. "I will not deny that Mr. Woodford's sermon was not striking, but I never thought of going to sleep."

"You thought you would not," answered Isabel, maliciously.

"I was not asleep," said Hilda Marston.

"Were you not?" replied Isabel, as if it were a matter of no consequence, and then the subject dropped.

In the afternoon the weather grew worse. The blinding rain came beating against the windows of the house, and the wind swept moaning through the trees. They lingered as long as they could over the luncheon table,

and then first Hilda retired. After she was gone the squire went to the reading-room of the library, took up Saturday's *Times*, and sank back in an easy chair before a blazing fire. Isabel and Hayward were thus left to amuse themselves as best they could. Isabel having looked out of the window at the storm, and regretted that she supposed they could not play billiards (at which suggestion, Hayward smilingly shook his head), she proposed that they should go over the house and look at the pictures.

So they went together up the broad staircase, where many valuable ones were hung. The great masters, whose hands have made the canvas live, were nearly all represented at Massam. Catalogue in hand, Isabel went up and down the long gallery, pointing out this gem or that, to the tutor. She had been here with Sir George, and knew where the Rembrandt hung, and where the Poussin. But she lingered longest before the smiling beauties that Sir Peter Lely's art had portrayed. Amongst these were some of the

ancestresses of Hamilton's—fair women who had played their part in the comedies and tragedies of their time, and then had vanished from the scene. Isabel kept speculating about them to the tutor, and wondering if a certain diamond necklace, clasped round the plump throat of one fair dame, was yet among the treasures of the house.

“I always envy jewels,” said Isabel. “My good lady,” she went on mockingly, addressing the pictured lady smiling on the wall, “will you give me your necklace?”

Hayward made no reply. He was looking at Isabel. At the wonderful tints of her lovely face, at the glimmer of her golden hair, shining even in the dark gallery, with the darkening clouds overhead. She was fairer than all these dead women hanging around, who had been painted, and passed away. “Too fair,” Hayward thought, almost with a groan at that moment.

“Why are you so silent?” said Isabel, turning round suddenly, and looking at him. Then, carried away by the impetuous feel-



ings surging in his heart, Hayward caught both her white and supple hands in his.

"I was thinking," he said; "thinking of Isabel—of you——"

Isabel was startled for an instant by the passionate ring in his voice, by the light in his eyes, and by his unexpected touch. Then she recovered herself.

"A very stupid occupation, Mr. Hayward," she said, trying to pull her hands from his.

"Oh! do not jest any more, Isabel," went on Hayward. "I must speak—I cannot be silent now."

"But——" said Isabel, embarrassed.

"You have known it long; I know you have known it long," continued Hayward, interrupting her, "but, lately I have dared to think, Isabel——"

"What?" she asked, and she looked into his face.

"That you care for me—that I am not indifferent to you," faltered Hayward. And then, with honest, manly pride ringing in his voice and shining in his face, he went on,

"You know what I am ! A poor man, who has yet to win his way. But, Isabel, I will win it," he continued, in his fond tenderness. "Whisper one word, say one word, tell me what shall be my reward ?"

As Hayward paused, Isabel's eyes fell from his face.

"I—I—do like you," she said, hesitatingly; "but you must know——"

"What ?" It was now Hayward's turn to ask, as he looked quickly up.

"That in our relative positions," went on Isabel, with some discomfort in her voice, "that is—if you mean anything serious."

"I am not jesting," said Hayward, with sudden sternness.

"I mean, if you think anything about marrying," continued Isabel.

"Of what else could I think ?" said Hayward. "Isabel—surely you have not been playing with me ?"

"It is impossible," said Isabel, "you know it is impossible."

"Then, why," asked Hayward, indig-

nantly, "have you trifled with me? If marriage is impossible between us, why have you seemed as if you wished me to love you?"

"Perhaps I have acted wrongly," said Isabel. "But Mr. Hayward—I wish to be your friend." And she held out her hand to him.

"Friend!" echoed Hayward, bitterly. "No, Miss Trevor, that can never be! I—I—love you—love you as a man loves the woman he asks to be his wife—nothing else will satisfy me now!"

"Then I repeat," said Isabel, "it is impossible."

"And you have been fooling me all this time?" went on Hayward, yet more bitterly. "What was your motive, Miss Trevor? What honour or glory could you gain by deceiving a man so contemptible in your eyes as I am?"

"You are not contemptible," said Isabel. "I—I—as I said before, I like you, and wish to be your friend. Everything else is

impossible between us—because—I may as well tell you the truth—I am engaged to Sir George Hamilton.”

Even Isabel’s cold heart felt ashamed and stricken when she saw the grey look of despair that passed over the tutor’s face at this announcement. But he uttered no word. He only pressed his teeth tightly over his under lip, and his face turned white, and then a cold, sickly grey.

“I—I—am sorry if this pains you,” faltered Isabel, “but it is better that you should know the truth.”

“Yes, much better,” said Hayward. “And now I will go away.” And he turned to leave her.

“Nay, stay, let us talk it over,” said Isabel. But he never looked back. He passed straight and silently down the long gallery; and straight and silently, and with a heart bursting with intolerable pain, he went out into the rain-soaked, storm-beaten park.

## CHAPTER XV.

### DESPAIR.

THE most bitter of human passions were raging in Hayward's breast after he left Isabel. Disappointed love and jealousy had possession of him, and despair was not far away. What? she had been fooling him all the while! It was a fool's paradise that he had been living in, and now suddenly he was turned out in the cold.

He remembered it all—all the looks and smiles with which she had wiled on him, and now—O God! O God! was it all false—all a dream?

He never felt the rain that was beating on his face as he went through the damp park, nor heard the storm that was raging

around him. His soul seemed all dark. What was the use of his living on? He had nothing to live for. His ambition, his love, his pride were all crushed in one blow; and when he reached the first great clump of trees, with a groan he flung himself down, burying his face in the wet dank grass.

But in this hour of despair he was not left alone. There had been an unintentional listener to the words that had passed between him and Isabel in the picture gallery, a listener whose cheeks had burnt and whose heart had throbbed as she heard them. This was Hilda Marston. She had been sitting reading in one of the deep-curtained windows of the gallery when Isabel and Hayward entered it. She imagined that they would just pass through it, and then go, and she therefore made no sign of her presence. Suddenly, however, when they were close to her, Isabel had stopped before the picture of the lady with the diamond necklace; and to Hilda's shame, pain, and consternation, she overheard the momentous

words which were then spoken. Before she could speak to let them know she was there it was too late. Hayward, carried away by his impetuous feelings, had declared his love, and Hilda, trembling with agitation, had heard the answer.

Then she saw Hayward pass down the gallery with his grey set face. Its expression haunted and startled her. "She has broken his heart," Hilda thought. "Oh! false woman, you have broken his heart!"

The false woman who had done this was standing looking very uncomfortable at this moment. She liked Hayward. His genuine honest devotion, his good looks, and his winning manners, were all pleasant to her. But to marry him, it was folly, madness. "The young man's head must be turned," decided Isabel.

But she knew quite well who had turned it. Deep down in her heart was an uneasy consciousness. She knew that Hayward had loved her long and well, and she knew that lately she had flattered him into the belief

that she had returned that love. She had believed him to be, and wished him to continue, her devoted slave, and in return she meant to give him her honeyed smiles, her bright, careless, and unprofitable words. But now, when he had rejected these, she respected him more. She wished to win him back. "He will come back," she thought; and thinking this, she walked down the picture gallery, and Hilda Marston was alone.

As the sound of Isabel's footsteps died away, Hilda glanced out on the rain-soaked, deserted park. Some instinct told her that in his misery Hayward would rush from the house. She looked out, and there he was hurrying on in the blinding rain—reckless, despairing. "My God!" thought Hilda, starting to her feet, "he may do something—some rash act that can never be recalled." She ran down the gallery and to her own room in the next few moments. Hastily seizing a hat and cloak when she got there, five minutes after Hayward had crossed the



park, she also was crossing it. She went with fear and dread in her heart. Oh! if she were too late! The girl ran panting, breathless on, pursued by this thought. Then suddenly, as she passed the first great clump of trees that she came to, a groan struck her ears. Hilda gave a shiver and went on—went on until she came to where the prostrate form of Hayward lay in the wet grass, his face hidden in it, and his hands dashed over his head in his great misery.

“Mr. Hayward!” said Hilda, with a half sob, and she went up to him.

Then Hayward lifted his face and looked up, and when he saw her (with sudden shame that she should see him thus) he rose to his feet.

“Forgive me for following you!” panted Hilda; “but—but Mr. Hayward, I was in the picture-gallery just now. I—overheard what passed between you and Isabel Trevor.”

Hayward’s face flushed for a moment at

this, and then the sickly grey pallor stole over it again.

"I heard all the wicked words she said," went on Hilda, passionately. "I know what she is—she is cruel! Don't grieve about her, Mr. Hayward—beautiful as she is, she is not worth a true man's regret."

Hayward said nothing. He stood there facing Hilda, and Hilda, as she looked at him, felt still afraid.

"You have a mother, have you not?" she said, quickly, "Will you go home to your mother?"

"No—oh, no," answered Hayward, and he shivered.

Something in the expression of his face as he said this yet further alarmed Hilda. It was so dark. There was despair in it, and so the girl timidly put out her hand and laid it on his arm.

"Come into the house with me," she said. "You are so wet and cold. Come, Mr. Hayward."

"I cannot go," said Hayward. "I am going away. I will never come back."

But Hilda kept urging him. At all events she would not leave him, she decided.

"Stay at least," she said, "until Sir George returns. Remember he is not to blame for this."

"No," said Hayward, sharply. "I cannot see him. No. I will go."

"Not to-day, surely?" asked Hilda.

"Yes, now," answered Hayward. "There will be a train soon, I dare say," he continued, looking at his watch. "Good-bye, Miss Marston—I thank you for your kindness."

But Hilda would not leave him.

"You cannot go as you are," she said, with womanly reasoning. "You have no outer-coat on, and you cannot go without your luggage."

He had forgotten all about these things. But now he saw that if he left Massam without them he would expose himself to Hilda's grave suspicions. For a moment he hesitated, and then he said—

"Will you promise me one thing, Miss Marston? Will you tell no one that I am leaving Massam?"

"I will tell no one," answered Hilda, and after she had given this promise, Hayward walked with her to the house. When he got there he went straight up to his own room for a few minutes, and there wrote a short letter to Sir George. Hilda was waiting in the corridor that led to his room, looking pale and anxious, when he came out of it. In his hand he held the letter to Sir George, and when he saw ~~Hilda~~ he came towards her.

"Will you take charge of this?" he said.

"Yes," replied Hilda, glancing at the address.

"I thank you—and now good-bye," went on Hayward, and he held out his hand to Hilda.

"No," she answered. "I am going with you. I will walk with you to the station."

"Impossible! You cannot go on a day like this."

"Yes, I am going," said Hilda, decisively, "or shall I order one of the servants to drive you?"

But Hayward shrank from the delay. No, he would go now; and so Hilda followed him out.

They went through the wet park together and through the drifting rain. She was afraid in fact to leave him; afraid to trust him alone with the blank despair that was dragging at his heart. He asked her once or twice to return, but Hilda would not go.

"No," she said gently; "let me stay with you. The rain will do me no harm."

She tried to say some commonplace words of consolation, but they seemed to die on her lips. In sight of great grief or death, it is almost impossible to speak. Words seem so cold when uttered in these terrible hours. At last they neared the station, and Hilda bade Hayward good-bye. Her hand trembled in his, and her sweet-toned voice faltered as she did so. The tutor was touched even amid his own pain by these signs of emotion.

Hilda's wistful eyes said so much when she raised them to his face ; they told him better than words could how truly she felt for him.

"I pray God to bless you," said Hilda ; and then she wrung his hand and turned away to hide the tears that dimmed her sight.

"You have been very good to me," said Hayward, and that was all. He, too, could frame no speech. His lips were quivering and his face quite pale. Hilda thought of that face as she hurried back to Massam through the blinding rain, and its expression helped her to come to a momentous decision in her own life.

She had, indeed, no sooner reached the park than she went, wet as she was, in search of Mr. Trevor. She found him half asleep in the easy chair in the reading-room of the library, where he had retired after lunch, with the *Times* still lying on his knee. But her approach awoke him, and he looked up in surprise.

"My dear Miss Marston," he said, rising,

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as Hilda drew near to him, "you surely have not been out in this terrible weather?"

"Yes," answered Hilda, trembling. "And —I have come to tell you, Mr. Trevor," she went on, speaking quickly and in much agitation, "that I cannot marry you."

The squire looked at her with the most profound astonishment.

"I do not understand you," he said. "I thought that it was agreed between us that a fortnight was to elapse before this subject was to be again mentioned?"

"Yes, I know," answered Hilda, "but I think now, something has happened now which has made me think that it is better to tell you at once—for, though I am very grateful to you, I have quite made up my mind."

"Do you mean to reject my proposal?" asked the squire, with immense dignity.

"I cannot accept it," said Hilda, trembling all over. "I do not feel to you as a woman should feel to the man she is about to marry. It would be wronging you if I were to accept

you," went on the poor girl, "and I feel I cannot do that."

Mr. Trevor felt extremely indignant. Here was a girl without position, without a penny, daring to say such things to him! Mr. Trevor thought at that moment of the benefits with which he had loaded Hilda and her family, but he did not think of the girl's honesty in telling him the truth.

"I am utterly surprised at you," he said. "Your conduct in coming here in this unseemly manner, on a Sunday, too, has absolutely astonished me. Your dress, also, is completely drenched. May I ask if you have been out in the rain?"

"Yes," answered Hilda, and then she suddenly burst into tears.

"Pray don't, Miss Marston," said Mr. Trevor, rising in great wrath, "there is not the slightest occasion for you to agitate yourself. I understand you reject my proposal? Ah—well, of course, under such circumstances you can no longer continue an inmate of my house."



"Very well," sobbed poor Hilda; and then she left him, going wet, weary, and very sad to her own room.

When they assembled again before dinner time, Mr. Trevor at once noticed Hayward's absence.

"Is Mr. Hayward dining out?" he inquired.

No one at first made any answer. Isabel coloured faintly but did not speak, and Hilda also was silent. Mr. Trevor glanced from the one to the other, and then said,

"Does any one know where he is?"

Then Hilda spoke.

"He has left Massam," she said.

"Left Massam?" repeated Isabel.

"Yes," said Hilda, so consciously that the squire instantly concluded that Hayward was engaged to Hilda, and that this was the reason why she had rejected his own proposal. He felt more indignant, therefore, than ever. He felt so angry he could not eat his dinner, and Hilda could not eat hers, she felt so sad. She was thinking what dis-



appointment all this would cause in the broken home circle. And little Ned—poor little Ned! Hilda's eyes nearly filled with tears again whenever she thought of her little brother. Would Mr. Trevor now cast him out homeless upon the world? Hilda kept thinking what she could do to make money, all through that melancholy dinner hour. But no sooner was it over than Isabel attacked her about Hayward.

"What do you know about Mr. Hayward leaving here?" she asked, the moment the two were alone. "Have you seen him? Did you see him go?"

"Yes, I saw him go," answered Hilda.

"When, and how?" then asked Isabel.

"About four o'clock, I think," said Hilda.

"He walked to the station."

"What! in all the rain?"

"Yes, in all the rain," said Hilda, with some bitterness.

Isabel caught the tone of her voice, and looked at her searchingly.

"Do you know his motive for going?" she asked sharply.

Hilda's lips trembled, but she was silent.

"I repeat," asked Isabel, imperiously, "Do you know his motive?"

"He did not tell me," said Hilda slowly; and with this answer Isabel was forced to be content.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### DELILAH.

WHEN Sir George Hamilton returned to Massam on the following day, and was informed that Hayward was gone, he seemed greatly disturbed.

Isabel told him in her usual careless fashion before her father and Hilda Marston.

"What do you think has happened," she said, "while you have been away?"

"Of course I cannot tell," answered Sir George.

"Your protégé, Mr. Hayward, has disappeared," said Isabel, with a slight blush. "I suppose," she added, "he must have been suddenly summoned home. He left after lunch yesterday."

"And did he not say what was the matter? Did he not say where he was going?" inquired Sir George.

"No, it seems not," replied Isabel. "I did not see him before he left, but Miss Marston did, I believe. Did he say where he was going?" she continued, turning to Hilda.

"No," said Hilda, her face flushing as she spoke. "But—Sir George—" she added, addressing their host with some embarrassment, "he left a letter for you."

"With you?" asked Sir George.

"Yes," answered Hilda. "I met him when he was leaving—and—he gave me a letter."

Hilda hesitated and blushed, when she said this, and both Mr. Trevor and Isabel Trevor looked at her as she did so.

"You have kept this mysterious letter to yourself, then, it seems?" said Isabel, with an angry glitter in her eyes, after Hilda had finished speaking.

"He gave it to me for Sir George," said Hilda, nervously.

"Oh, I have no wish to interfere with Sir George's letters," said Isabel, throwing back her head.

"I will bring it," said Hilda; and she accordingly left the room for the purpose, Sir George looking after her as she did so.

"It is very strange, is it not?" he said, turning to Isabel as Hilda disappeared.

"How can I tell?" she answered, with a slight shrug of her fine shoulders.

But she felt nervous. What might not Hayward have written? she was thinking. But she stood her ground. She watched Sir George as he opened Hayward's letter after Hilda had returned and placed it in his hands—watched his usually pale face flush as he eagerly read and re-read the few written lines it contained. Then he looked at her searchingly, and then, when for a moment Isabel's eyes fell before his, he put the letter silently into his pocket.

"Does he give any explanation for his absence?" inquired Mr. Trevor, pompously.

"Yes," answered Sir George, briefly; but

Isabel knew when she heard that word, that she would hear more at some future time of Hayward's letter.

She did so, the first moment that she was alone with Sir George.

"Isabel," he asked, approaching his betrothed with a grave and disturbed expression on his face, "can you guess, do you know the contents of young Hayward's letter?"

"No, I do not," answered Isabel, in a slightly defiant tone.

"Yet he refers me to you," continued Sir George, "to explain the reason why he left. But you had better read his letter." And he put Hayward's letter in her hand.

She took it and slowly read the few blotted and ill-written words. They were as follows :—

"DEAR SIR GEORGE,—I leave Massam to-day. Miss Trevor will probably explain to you why I am going and tell you of



my presumption. I have nothing further to say, but remain,—Yours truly,

“P. HAYWARD.”

“Well?” said Sir George, looking at Isabel, inquiringly, after she had finished reading the letter, and was commencing returning it to its envelope.

“Well!” she answered in her cool, proud way, “it was as he says—he forgot himself, that is all.”

“What do you mean?” asked Sir George, quickly.

“He is a foolish young man,” went on Isabel. “Because I said a few civil words to him—because, in fact, I naturally regarded him with interest, as he had saved your life, he presumed to imagine——” And Isabel paused.

“That you regarded him with a deeper feeling?” said Sir George. “I warned you of this before, Isabel!” And Sir George began hastily pacing the room, which was a sign with him of quick emotion.



As he did so, Isabel kept watching him with her bright and changeful eyes.

"He is a foolish young man," she said again presently. "And you are also to blame for this."

"How? what do you mean?" asked Sir George, suddenly stopping.

"You—made me angry," said Isabel, casting down her eyes. "You know what I mean—you seemed at one time to avoid me—and if I misled the young man—I was foolish, too—for I did it in pique."

"Is this so?" said Sir George, going up to her and clasping both her hands and fixing his eyes upon her face. "Oh, Isabel, Isabel!"

Yet he only half believed in her. Did Samson, I wonder, quite believe in Delilah's soft cozening words, or did he feel only powerless to resist them? Sir George, at all events, was powerless in the white supple hands that could turn him to her will. He stood there looking at her, and then in passionate words of love began pleading that

their marriage might not be delayed. For a moment Hayward was forgotten. He only saw Isabel—Isabel, who cared nothing for him except as the owner of the broad lands which lay around them.

It was all settled before the day was over. Mr. Trevor was told, and gave his pleased consent. Hilda Marston was told, and the very butler knew, as he waited at table that day, that he was attending his future lady.

Isabel was a woman who loved all this. Adulation and praise were pleasant to her ears and flattery was sweet. She loved also the jewels which Sir George presented her, and when he asked leave to clasp round her slender white throat the sparkling sapphire that she had coveted the first night she was at Massam, and which Sir George had had set for her, she told herself, as she thanked him with her rosy lips, that she must learn in time to care for the giver of all these fine gifts.

She felt very triumphant, too, when she told the "Featherstone girls" of her engage-

ment and asked them to be her bridesmaids. Patty and Lu could scarcely contain their astonishment, indeed, within the bounds of good breeding when they heard the news.

“So,” said Lu, thoughtfully, “all those stories about him were lies, I suppose?”

“Lies are not uncommon things, my good Lu,” answered Isabel, smiling. “For my part, I never quite believe what I hear.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### HAYWARD'S MOTHER.

BUT we must return to Hayward, return to when Hilda Marston left him at the railway station, and when, with a crushing sense of pain, shame, and humiliation, he shortly afterwards started on his journey to town.

He had taken a ticket for London, but almost without reason. His mother lived there, but he was not going to her. He only felt that there he would be unknown, for there was a dark purpose in his heart and overwhelming bitterness in his soul. Isabel Trevor, in fact, had turned his life to gall. What had been play to her was death to him. He had loved her so much,

making an idol of her, with as blind an idolatry as the poor heathen gives to his imaged god.

He sat in his carriage in the train, with his grey set face turned to the window, and his eyes apparently fixed intently on the drifting rain. There were other people in the carriage, but he scarcely saw them; pleasant words exchanged, but he never heard them. He only felt that his life was blank for evermore, and that he had thrown all upon one cast and failed.

Presently, at one of the stations, some of the passengers got out of the carriage. He saw them go, and that was all. One man, however, was left in it—a man who had been looking attentively at Hayward once or twice during the last half-hour.

He was a clergyman. A tall, powerfully-made young man, with smooth fair hair, and a fair skin tanned. He had large, rather prominent, steady grey eyes, and with these he looked at Hayward again and again, as they travelled onward. He was, in fact,

studying Hayward's face. Then, in a pleasant, clear-toned voice, when they were alone, he addressed him.

"Pardon me for speaking to you," he said; "are you not Mrs. Hayward's son?"

"Yes," answered Hayward, turning his grey set face a moment from the window. "I am Philip Hayward."

"I thought I could not be mistaken," said the young clergyman, with a smile.

"I know your photograph so well, and your mother has so often talked to me of her Philip, that I was sure I was right. I am glad," he added, his face re-assuming its usual sweet, serious expression, "that she has written to you to go to her. I suppose she has told you the truth at last?"

"What truth?" asked Hayward, sharply.

For a moment the young clergyman hesitated. Then he said with much gentleness, "I suppose you know she is very ill?"

"Ill!" repeated Hayward. "I have heard nothing of any illness. I know nothing of her being ill."

At this a disturbed expression crossed the clergyman's face.

"I am indeed sorry to be the bearer of ill news, then," he said, "but it is right that you should know. Mrs. Hayward is, I fear, in a rapid consumption."

"It is impossible!" exclaimed Hayward. "When last I saw her she was not strong, but she never is. May I ask you how you know of her being ill? And when did you last see her?"

"I saw her about a week ago," answered the clergyman, "and I saw the doctor who attends her about the same time—and I grieve to tell you his opinion was very unfavourable. It was indeed after I had seen the doctor that I urged her so much to write to you. But you were on a visit, she told me—a visit to Sir George Hamilton—a visit from which she seemed to expect so much, and she could not bear to damp your enjoyment."

At this Hayward could scarcely suppress the groan that rose to his lips.

"But when I saw you," continued the young clergyman, "I hoped that during my absence (for I have been a week out of town) she had broken through her resolve, and told you of her illness."

"No," answered Hayward, "I have heard nothing. I had a letter from her the other day, and she said nothing. I—I—am completely overwhelmed by the news."

He turned away his head as he spoke. Of what was he thinking? O God! what had he been about to do? He had forgotten all about his poor mother in his dark despair. Had forgotten duty, affection, everything, under the blow which had struck him down. Now, he began to think. His mother—the gentle, tender mother, that had loved and watched over him all these years! Oh, how could he have forgotten her; how allow his selfish misery to drive everything else from his heart!

"Tell me all about her, sir," he said, in a broken voice, to the young clergyman sitting opposite to him. "How did you



get to know her? How long has she been ill?"

"I have known her about a year," answered the clergyman. "I am one of the curates of the parish in which she lives. I ought to tell you my name, too. It is Horace Jervis. I got to know her when visiting in my district, and naturally soon became interested in her. She was ill, even when I first saw her—I think she told me that she had not seen you for nearly eighteen months?"

Hayward thought for a moment, and then said: "Yes, it is just about eighteen months."

"So she told me," went on Mr. Jervis, "and she also gradually told me her history. Then I learnt that my father and yours had been in the same regiment, the 84th, and this also naturally increased my interest in her and you. I have visited her constantly, and lately, as I told you, I have repeatedly urged her to tell you of her illness. But, with unselfish affection, she could not bear to give you pain."

"Oh! my God!" groaned Hayward, and he covered his face.

"It would be sad to see her," continued Mr. Jervis, "for at times she suffers greatly, if her soul were not so pure and white. I cannot help thinking of the angels when I look on your mother's face."

Again Hayward groaned aloud. His soul was so blank and dark that the young clergyman's words struck him like a sword.

"I—I—must seem a brute to you," he muttered.

"Why?" asked Mr. Jervis, surprised. "You did not even know of your mother's illness. But you will go to her now. She will die now, where I am sure she wishes to die—in her dear son's arms."

"Yes," said Hayward, and he bit his quivering lip.

At that moment some of the vague doubtings and yearnings for *Light*, that had so often passed and repassed over his soul, recurred to Hayward. Was this meeting accidental, he thought, or had the hand of

God been put out to save him from a fearful crime? Opposite to him was the calm, sweet, pleasant face of Mr. Jervis. Hayward looked at him with his gloomy eyes, wondering if the look of peace imprinted on it came from earthly happiness. Then he thought of his mother—the mother whose life for the last twenty years had been a weary struggle. And she was dying now—dying, and he——

“I know that she has longed, almost passionately, and prayed most earnestly, to see you,” said Mr. Jervis, interrupting Hayward’s remorseful reflections. “I know this from little things she has said. But her faith is perfect. The very last time I saw her she told me that if it were God’s will she would see you soon.”

“And yet—and yet——” said Hayward with deep emotion, “unless I had met you——”

“Her prayers might have been answered in some other way,” replied Mr. Jervis, quietly; “for we are sure that none of them will be unheard.”

He said this in the simplest way. There was no faltering or doubt in this young man's belief. Hayward, passion-tossed and miserable, looked with strange envy on the serene eyes and brow of this young curate. They were both about the same age—some twenty-six or seven years old, perhaps—and both were tall, strong, stalwart men. They were both brave, also. Hayward had plunged into a raging sea at a woman's bidding, with death staring him in the face; but Mr. Jervis faced death daily. He faced it in the fever wards of hospitals, in dreary dens of misery, poverty, and shame.

He spoke of his work very quietly. He had chosen his vocation. Earth and Heaven were alike real to him, and he cheerfully toiled in one, sure of finding his reward in the other. In spite of himself, Hayward grew interested. Earnestness about anything inspires a thoughtful mind with respect, and Mr. Jervis was so much in earnest.

By the time they reached London it was dark.

"It has been a dreary day," said Hayward, with a shudder.

"Yes," said Mr. Jervis; but neither his manner nor his tone was dreary.

Hayward, on the other hand, felt inexpressibly miserable. He was conscience-stricken, and crushed down with a sense of his selfish cowardice. What, if he had stabbed his dying mother in his mad passion! he thought, for he knew what in his bitter disappointment he contemplated doing would have been a blow to her more cruel than death.

Mr. Jervis was very kind to him. Perhaps he saw that something even more terrible than his mother's illness was preying on Hayward's mind. At all events, he was very good to him, gentle, sympathizing, and considerate, though not obtrusively so.

When they arrived in town, he proposed to accompany Hayward to the house where his mother lived. He had two motives for this: one, that he thought that in her present weak condition her

son's arrival should be broken gently to Mrs. Hayward; another, that he did not like to leave Hayward alone. Hayward made no objection to this proposal—nay, it was a sort of relief to him to have a companion in this miserable hour.

Mrs. Hayward was very poor. She had only her paltry pension as a lieutenant's widow, and the small sum that her son had been able to allow her out of his salary. Still Hayward was shocked and surprised when the cab in which the young men were seated stopped, by Mr. Jervis's directions, before the humble dwelling where the curate informed him his mother lived. It was only a common lodging-house, a lodging-house in Ranelagh Road, in which two workmen and their families also lived. The poor widow had gone to this house to save. Her son was away, and she knew no one; and so in this noisy, over-full house she existed, putting away each month half of the sum that Hayward had regularly sent her.

She had only one room—a room which looked into the street and at the great furniture-removing establishment opposite. She was too ill to go out, and she used to sit at the window vaguely watching the great vans coming and going. It was a desolate life, and yet this poor woman was not desolate. She lived there, hoping in God's good time to rejoin her husband; she lived there, praying for and thinking of her only son.

That son felt almost utterly overcome as he entered the house where she lived. A hard-faced woman, who opened the door in answer to Mr. Jervis's summons, received them, and on the curate inquiring for Mrs. Hayward, said :

“ I'm sure I'm glad you've come back, sir, to look after her. I don't know what to do with her, she's fearful ill—but perhaps this gentleman's some relation ?” And she looked at Hayward.

Hayward made no answer. He was struck dumb with the appearance of poverty

around. His mother had written to him to tell him that she had changed her lodgings, but she had told him nothing more.

"Where is her room?" he asked hoarsely.

"The first door upstairs, to the left, sir," answered the woman. "She's been very bad to-day. She ought to have some of her friends about her."

"Let me go up first," said Mr. Jervis, laying his hand kindly on Hayward's arm.

"No," said Hayward, "no;" and he began ascending the narrow, uncarpeted stairs.

When he reached the first door to the left he paused. It was slightly ajar, and he stood for a moment looking in. He saw inside a woman—a woman familiar, and yet not familiar—a woman on whose face death had set its stamp, and whose features were so sharpened and changed that he scarcely recognized them. Yet, it was his mother. Hayward saw this, and he saw also by the same light on the table, which flickered and fell on his mother's



pale face, and on her pale, thin hand, that she was reading one of his own letters—a letter that he had written from Massam when his heart had been full of hope. There she sat, reading and re-reading her son's words, as she had read them many a time before. She smiled as she did so; smiled, and then a sudden flood of hope, of joy, and almost of inspiration, seemed to pass over her heart.

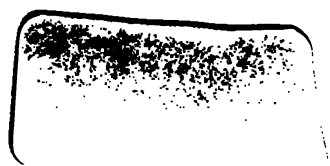
“O God!” she murmured, looking upwards, “Let me see my dear boy's face before I die.”

When Hayward heard these words he came slowly forward, and the next moment he was clasped tightly in his mother's arms.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.



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